

**TRANSLATION AND THE AUTHORIAL IMAGE:
RECEPTION OF LATİFE TEKİN'S LITERARY WORKS
WITHIN THE SOURCE AND THE TARGET
CULTURE(S)**

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the reception of Latife Tekin's literary works and her authorial image shaped within the source and target culture(s). Exploring the role rewriters/rewritings, including translation, play in the reception and image-shaping processes, the study demonstrates that there exists a dual interaction between the source and target culture(s) receptions of Tekin's works. This thesis discusses the source culture and the target culture(s) receptions of Tekin's works, respectively, and presents a comparative account of the differences and similarities in the reception of Tekin's works. By analyzing all these aspects, this thesis aims to survey how rewritings have been influential in the reception of Tekin's literary works and to examine how the authorial image has been determined and transformed within both the source and target culture(s).

Kısa Özet

Bu çalışma, Latife Tekin'in edebi eserlerinin kaynak ve erek kültürlerde ne şekilde alımlandığına ve bu kültürlerde Latife Tekin için oluşturulan yazar imgesine odaklanarak, çevirinin de dahil olduğu yeniden-yazma (rewriting) ve yeniden-yazan (rewriter) kavramlarının alımlama ve imge oluşturma süreçlerinde oynadığı rolü araştırır ve Latife Tekin'in eserlerinin alımlanmasında kaynak ve erek kültürler arasında karşılıklı bir etkileşim olduğunu ortaya koyar.

Sırasıyla Latife Tekin'in eserlerinin kaynak kültür ve erek kültür alımlanması tartışılır ve bu iki kültürde oluşan alımlama arasındaki farklılıklar ve benzerlikler karşılaştırmalı olarak sunulur. Özetle bu tez, yeniden-yazma (rewriting) kavramının Latife Tekin'in eserlerinin kaynak ve erek kültürdeki alımlanmasını ne şekilde etkilediğini ve Tekin'in yazar imgesinin ne şekilde oluşturulduğunu incelemeyi amaçlar.

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Introduction

In a panel discussion at the İstanbul Book Fair in October 2004 on "Destitution and Literature" Latife Tekin was introduced as an author who gives voice to destitute people and creates a language for them. The chairperson, like most of the critics on the Turkish literary scene, associated Tekin and her writing with destitution. After the chairperson's introductory remarks Tekin expressed her feelings and experiences about poverty and deprivation which she portrays as an overall theme in her novels and surprisingly noted that "When I first started to write I did not have the intention of writing the tales of destitute people; on the contrary I wanted to tell other happy and joyous stories. However, after my first novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*¹) was published the subject of destitution somehow stuck with me and telling stories about destitution became inevitable" (Tekin 2004). At this point, a relevant question might be who or what caused destitution to stick with Tekin and what kind of a role they played in Tekin's literary journey.

It can be claimed that literary professionals such as critics and reviewers play a significant role in shaping the image of a writer in a particular literary environment. These persons have considerable

¹ *Dear Shameless Death* is the title of the English translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. It was translated into English by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne and published by Marion Boyars in 2001.

influence on a writer's literary career as do publishing houses. It can also be speculated that the literary professionals have become participants in Tekin's literary journey as well. The concept of "rewriting" (Lefevere 1992: 2) introduces an approach which underlines the significance of the literary professionals and institutions in the processes of reception and image-shaping. Lefevere posits:

It is my contention that the process resulting in the acceptance or rejection, canonization or noncanonization of literary works is dominated not by vague, but very concrete factors that are relatively easy to discern as soon as one decides to look for them. That is as soon as one eschews interpretation as the core of literary studies and begins to address issues such as power, ideology, institution and manipulation. As soon as one does this, one also realizes that rewriting in all its forms occupies a dominant position among the concrete factors just referred to. (Lefevere 1992: 2)

Regarding Lefevere's concept of rewriting how the literary works of an author received within a literary and socio-cultural system can be evident in the "rewriting[s] [which] includes such operations as translations (Lefevere 1992: 7) literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions" (Lefevere 1992: 8). Theo Hermans also addresses rewritings as "translation, criticism, reviewing, summary, adaptation for children, anthologizing, making into a comic strip or TV film and so on, in short any processing of a text whether in the same or another language or in another medium" (Hermans 1999: 127). Moreover, as Hermans points out "rewritings are of crucial social and cultural relevance because they determine the 'image' of a literary

work when direct access to that work is limited or nonexistent” (Hermans 1999: 128); thus, they also become relevant evidence for projecting the authorial image. Concerning these standpoints it would be apt to discuss that rewritings might be regarded as determining both the reception of the literary works and the authorial image.

What might be the situation if the subject that is focused on is the writer’s image in foreign cultures? In practice, rewritings remain as significant instruments in the reception process and in determining the authorial image. However, if the subject is a writer’s image or reception of the writer’s literary work(s) in foreign cultures translation comes to the forefront as one of the most important forms of rewriting. Since most of the readers worldwide cannot access Tekin's literary works directly in the language in which they were first written, the translators are responsible for introducing Tekin’s works to foreign cultures; in other words foreign cultures received Tekin's literary works through the translations provided by the translators.

From about the mid-seventies there appeared a shift and a new paradigm was established for studies carried out in the field of translation studies (Holmes 2000). In addition to this, there appeared a tendency to consider translation in a social, cultural and ideological framework with post-colonial translation grounds (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, and Robinson 1997). Preceding this, translation phenomena in general came

to be viewed as a part of a polysystem with the pioneering studies of Itamar Even-Zohar (1990). Moreover, as aforementioned, the concept of “rewriting” particularly posited by Lefevere, introduced an approach which focuses on the ideological aspect of the translation phenomena and points out the importance of the concept in relation to the processes of reception and image-shaping (Lefevere 1992: 2). Furthermore, an article by Stella Linn gives additional insight to the connection between the authorial image and literary translation (2003). Linn discusses the relationship in the case of the Spanish author Federico Garcia Lorca and a number of translations of his *Romancero gitano* into several languages. She argues that the image of an author might be influential in the selection of her/his works for translation and the selection of the texts and the presentation of the author might highlight some aspects of her/his works more than others. Thus, the intentional selection of the texts and presentation of the author contribute to the construction of a particular reception of the author in the target culture(s). Linn also emphasizes the importance of the literary professionals and rewritings both from the source and target culture(s) in the image-shaping process.

As translation is considered to be not only a linguistic but also a cultural transfer translators can be seen as one of the most influential means of cultural transfer. Therefore, it can be claimed that translators – as influential rewriters – play a key part in the reception of a literary work,

along with the reviewers and critics, due to the fact that they are the people who present a specific literary work to the target culture(s). Moreover as Anthony Pym points out translators hold a distinct position because they “operate from the intersections or overlaps of cultures”, in Pym’s words, from an “intercultural space” (Pym 2000: 2).

It can be speculated that the authorial image which is shaped within the source culture, might to a certain extent be influential in the reception of the author's works in the target culture(s). Which works of the author are translated, how the author is presented in prefaces and commentaries, might be regarded as significant in the reception of the author's works in the target culture(s). The reception of the author’s works and her/his authorial image in the target culture(s) in turn might have a transforming effect on the reception of the particular author’s works. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that there exists an association or a dual interaction between the authorial images shaped within the source and target culture(s).

This thesis aims to analyze the authorial image of Latife Tekin both within the source and the target culture(s) and to present a comparative account of the reception of two of Tekin’s novels: *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*

(*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*²). Furthermore, “because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in another culture” (Lefevere 1992: 9), the influential aspect of translation as rewriting is discussed along with other forms of rewritings, particularly book reviews and critical articles. The image of the author here refers to “the selective presentation of traits attributed to the author by collective or individual agents, especially literary professionals” (Linn 2003: 57).

In this study the term “reception” covers the critical responses of literary professionals but not of the ordinary reader. The term here, does not refer to reception theory (Machor and Goldstein 2001), or to the aesthetics of reception, *Rezeptionsästhetik*, which was proposed by Wolfgang Iser, and is not associated with reader-response criticism (Tompkins 1980). Reception theory, in general, “concerns itself first and foremost with one or more readers’ actualization of the text” (http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/reception_theory.html), and basically shifts attention from the author and the text to the reader. Moreover, reader-response criticism is composed of a group of approaches which emphasize the readers’ role in the creation of the meaning of a literary work (Tompkins 1980). A number of theorists such as Michael Riffaterre, Georges Poulet, Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish focus on the readers’ role in the explication of a text and posit that

² *Berci Krisitin Çöp Masalları* was translated into English with the title *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. The novel was translated by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker and published by Marion Boyars in 1993.

the readers actively participate in the production of the textual meaning (Tompkins 1980: xv). Although the term “reception” seems to have an association with reception and reader response theories, I will use it in this thesis as a term which refers to the responses of the literary professionals to Tekin’s literary works.

In this thesis, Chapter 1 (“Theoretical Framework and Methodology”) introduces the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. It discusses the role of the translation as a medium of travel and the role of the translator as a social and cultural agent who operates within an “interculture”, the overlap of two or more cultures. Moreover, the significance and influence of rewritings/rewriters on the construction of the authorial image is examined. Chapter 2 (“Reception of Latife Tekin’s Literary Works in the Source Culture”) offers a general overview of Tekin’s literary works and the traits attributed to the writer by Turkish literary critics who have played and (will play) an important part in shaping the image of the writer and the way Tekin’s works have been received in the source culture. Chapter 2 basically focuses on Tekin’s first five novels – *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, *Gece Dersleri*, *Buzdan Kılıçlar* and *Aşk İşaretleri*. I mostly focus on these novels because I speculate that they have a considerable formative influence on the reception of her works and construction of her image in the source culture. Chapter 2 also outlines the reasons why Tekin is

basically referred to as ‘the writer of poverty’ (Akerson 1990, Gürbilek 1996, Moran 2001, Tekin in Özer 2005, Parla 2000, Tekin 1984b; 1987a; 1995c) in the source culture. Chapter 3 (“Reception of Latife Tekin’s Literary Works in the Target culture(s)”) surveys how Tekin’s literary works were received in the Anglophone target culture(s). It also provides brief descriptive analyses on the English translations of *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*) and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) which demonstrate, particularly, the translation of the significant aspects of Tekin’s narrative such as the metaphorical and poetical language, and culture-specific elements. Chapter 3 also analyses the kind of roles translations played in the reception of Tekin’s works in the Anglophone literary world. Chapter 4 (“The Authorial Image of Latife Tekin Shaped within the Source and Target Culture(s)”) focuses on the kind of image Tekin has in the source and target culture(s) in relation to the reception of her literary works. In this chapter, I have firstly chosen to discuss the authorial image shaped within the source culture and then to deal with the image shaped within the target culture(s). The reason I have chosen to analyze the situation in the source culture first, is not because I apply a source-oriented method, but because I think that the source culture reception of Tekin’s works remains influential on the target culture(s) reception. Thus, I claim that there exists an interaction between the source and target culture(s)

receptions. Since the source culture reception precedes the reception of the translations, I first analyze Tekin's authorial image in Turkey. This is followed by a discussion on some of the significant aspects of Tekin's narrative such as marginality, timelessness, cross-culturality, magical realism and the feminist perspective. These were highlighted by the rewriters, both from the source and target culture(s), as the significant constituents in the reception of Tekin's novels. In the context of a comparative account of the reception of Tekin's works within the source and target culture(s), differences and similarities in the reception of Tekin's works are taken up. In analyzing all these aspects, this thesis aims to survey how rewritings have been influential in the reception of Tekin's literary works and to examine how the authorial image has been determined and transformed within both the source and target culture(s).

Chapter 1

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

1.1. Theoretical Framework

1.1.1. The role of “Translation” as the medium of travel

Translation in its broadest sense is considered a socio-cultural phenomenon and it has been conceived as a subject which is studied in the terrain of social, cultural and literary studies and travels between the cultural boundaries. Thus, translation can be approached as a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary field of study. As Sherry Simon posits, translation is “a rhetorical figure describing on the one hand the increasing internationalization of cultural production and on the other the fate of those who struggle between two worlds and two languages” (Simon 1996: 134). Regarding Simon’s words it can be noted that translation stands between the cultures as a medium of transfer. Translation represents not only the interrelation between the cultures but also the otherness of the cultures to one another. If we concentrate specifically on literature as a particular constituent of a culture, it would be apt to state that literature is a field in which translation frequently operates as an instrument functioning in the transmission of literary products from one culture to another. As André Lefevere notes, literature “to go back to the description of the Russian Formalist theorists, is one of

the systems that constitute the “complex ‘systems of systems’” known as culture. Alternatively, a culture, a society is the environment of a literary system. The literary system and the other systems belonging to the social system as such are open to each other: they influence each other” (Lefevere 1992: 14).

Translated literature, as Itamar Even-Zohar defines it, is “a denotation for a body of texts which is structured and functions as a system [and] not only as a system in its own right but as a system fully participating in the history of the polysystem, as an integral part of it, related with all the other co-systems” (Even-Zohar 2000: 193). Even-Zohar positions translated literature as a part of a polysystem which retains a constant dynamic interrelation with the other systems. Therefore, literature and translated literature crisscross in productive ways. With respect to these statements it might be argued that translation is a significant and influential instrument within the field of literary studies. Translation studies and literary theory have a mutual interplay. Literary studies “can make use of the insights provided by translation which is regarded as ‘the closest reading possible’” (Susam-Sarajeva 2002: 19). Thus, translation can be accepted as an instrument for literary criticism. Supporting this view, in “Translation and Literary Criticism”, Rainer Schulte underlines the importance of the interaction between translation

and literary criticism and he states that a “Rethinking of the relationship and interaction between translation and literary criticism is necessary” (Schulte 1982: 1).

If we think that literature travels around the world via translation, the importance of translation both in literary criticism and in literary reception becomes evident. What kind of a role does translation play in the reception of literature? To what extent is the effect of translation in the reception of literature emphasized? These questions are likely to be beneficial when (re)considering the role that translation plays in the reception of a literary work. André Lefevere’s concept of “rewriting” (1992: 2) highlights the importance of translation in literary reception:

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. (Lefevere 1992: vii)

Lefevere’s concept of rewriting sheds light on the process of reception and image making. According to Lefevere the concept of rewriting covers “literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions” (Lefevere 1992: 8) with “some selected passages of the actual text of the book in question (the passages included in anthologies used in secondary or university education, for

instance), supplemented by other texts that rewrite the actual text in one way or another, such as plot summaries in literary histories or reference works, reviews in newspapers, magazines, or journals, some critical articles, performances on stage or screen and, last but not least, translations” (Lefevere 1992: 6-7). Lefevere emphasizes that translation, of all these rewritings, is “potentially the most influential” (9) form.

As mentioned above, literature is conceived as a system in its own right and Lefevere claims that there exists “a double control factor” in the literary system (Lefever 1992:14). According to Lefevere, one of these control mechanisms works inside the literary system, and literary professionals like critics, reviewers, teachers and translators hold the control (ibid.). The second control factor works outside the literary system and is called “patronage” referring to “the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature” (Lefevere 1992: 15). Rewriters who operate inside the literary control mechanism are basically interested in the “poetics” and “ideology” (Lefevere 1992: 14) of literature. Lefevere’s way of contextualizing the concept of rewriting in relation to the “constraints of poetological and ideological currents” appears to be noteworthy because reception of a literary work in a particular society cannot be thought apart from current poetological and ideological grounds of that particular society. Therefore,

rewriting is a key concept in analyzing and perceiving the process of literary reception and image construction in which translation plays a substantial role.

1.1.2. The role of the translator in the interculture: A hybrid space

In an overall perspective, it can be considered that the translation phenomenon is composed of translation as the final product, and the act of translating as a process. Translators, on the other hand, can be considered leading actors in the process of translation. What constitutes the final translation product cannot be considered without also paying attention to the historical, sociological, ideological and cultural contributions of the translator. Therefore, translators should be subjected to critical analyses in the field of translation studies.

In this section, I would like to deal with the question of where translators operate. Where do they belong? Are they the agents of the source culture or the target culture(s) or do they stand in between? In the field of translation studies there exists a tendency to assume that translators belong to the target culture(s). For instance, Gideon Toury assumes that translators “operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating” (1995: 12) and they are the “persons-in-the-culture” of the target system (1995: 40). These notions,

and the question about where the translators belong to, have been discussed in the field and will certainly be discussed further in the future; however a concept related to the place where translators operate which has been put forward by Anthony Pym, paves the way to a new understanding of the matter. Pym rejects the idea that translators belong to the target culture(s) alone and points out that the translators hold a distinct position because they “operate from the intersections or overlaps of cultures” and Pym prefers to call this position an “intercultural space” (2000: 2). According to Pym, the intercultural space does not have anything to do with geographical locations, but what constitutes interculturality is “some degree of professional status” and “some hierarchical quality of ‘secondness’” (Pym 2002: 5). Pym states that “[interculturality] must refer to groups of people who, for reasons of institutionalized livelihood, are somehow engaged in the transfer of cultural products across borders...Interculturality would be what is common to the people who transfer knowledge, entertainment, security and their opposites, across what are construed as lines between cultures” (ibid.). Moreover, the acts of the professionals gain an intercultural status only when there exists an assumed line to be crossed from one culture to another (ibid.). Regarding Pym’s viewpoint, what constitutes the intercultural space are the agents who provide a cultural transfer. Therefore, the intercultural space can be referred to as the intercultural

community as well. In relation to the position that the translators hold, Pym suggests that “If translators are our point of departure, the historical object always involves some kind of intersection. Or, as a more general hypothesis, translators are intersections” (1998: 182-183). Therefore, Pym suggests that the translators must hold a distinctive position which stands in the middle.

Similar to Pym’s standpoint, Maria Tymoczko reports, “Translation has been characterized as a place or a space *in between* other spaces” (2003: 185). Tymoczko states that “The locution *between* has become one of the most popular means of figuring an *elsewhere* that a translator may speak from – an elsewhere that is somehow different from either the source culture or the receptor culture that the translator mediates between” (ibid.). In addition to these, Homi Bhabha addresses a “hybrid space” which stands between the cultures (1996: 58) and can be assumed as an equivalent of the concept of interculture³.

It might be argued that the translators as historical and social agents play a significant part in the reception of the literary works because they remain as the agents who initially provide the interaction between the source and target culture(s). When the translator is considered a mediator who operates in a hybrid space in which two or

³ The concept of interculture was taken up in a conceptual framework which “can open up a perspective for researches to observe the changes in Ottoman (inter)culture through the study of changes in the *terceme* and *nazire* practices of the poet translators” (Paker 2002: 121) by Saliha Paker in her article “Translation as *Terceme* and *Nazire*: Culture-bound Concepts and their Implications for a Conceptual Framework from Research on Ottoman Translation History”.

more different cultures overlap, the role s/he plays seems to carry weight as s/he has a considerable influence on the reception of the work within either the source or the target culture(s).

In the light of aforementioned concepts, the translators who translated Latife Tekin's *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*) and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) into English can be considered intercultural agents who operate in a hybrid space. Ruth Christie⁴ and Saliha Paker⁵ translated *Berji Kristin* and *Dear Shameless Death* was translated by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne⁶. The information about the translators of Tekin's novels evidently demonstrates that they operate as intercultural agents: they function as

⁴ Ruth Christie was born and educated in Scotland, taking a degree in English Language and Literature at the University of St. Andrews. She taught for two years in Turkey and later studied Turkish language and literature at London University. For many years she taught English literature to American undergraduates resident in London. With Saliha Paker she translated a Turkish novel by Latife Tekin (Marion Boyars, 1993) and in collaboration with Richard McKane a selection of the poems of Oktay Rıfat (Rockingham Press, 1993). A major collection of Nâzım Hikmet's poetry, again with Richard McKane, was published by Anvil Press in 2002. Translations of several short stories and poems by other Turkish writers have appeared in magazines and anthologies in Britain and Turkey (<http://www.arcpublications.co.uk/biogs/christie.htm>).

⁵ Saliha Paker is a Professor of Translation Studies in the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Since 1992, she has been an Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham. She studied English and Classics at İstanbul University and has taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. For the last twenty years her research has focused on Ottoman and her work in English includes an edited volume, *translations: (re)shaping of literature and culture* (Boğaziçi University Press, 2002), essays in various international publications, and translations of modern Turkish poetry and fiction. She is currently on the Executive modern Turkish translation history. Council of the International Association of Translation and Intercultural Studies and on the Translation Committee of the International Comparative Literature Association (*Translation Review* 2004: 87).

⁶ Mel Kenne teaches in the American Culture and Literature Department at Kadir Has University, İstanbul, Turkey. He has three published books of poetry and a sequence of poems in a musical/poetic/dramatic has been produced on a compact disk, entitled *The Book of Ed*. As a translator, he has rendered into English the work of several Latin American, Spanish and Turkish poets. He and Saliha Paker have co-translated a number of poems by Turkish poets and Latife Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) (*Translation Review* 2004: 87).

professionals who transfer something from one culture to another. These translators are professional agents of cultural transfer across the borders. Moreover, they have a considerable influence on the reception of Tekin's literary works both in the source and target culture(s) as the agents who influence the reception in both cultures and transfer the reception between the cultures.

1.1.3. Constructing the authorial image

Image, in general, can be defined as a representation of a person, an object, a scene or an act which is made perceptible to the sight. Image, also when attributed to a person can also be considered a personal facade that one presents to the world (Merriam-Webster <http://www.m-w.com>). The concept of "imago" according to John Soenen terms "generally refers to the popular but mostly one-sided or incomplete notion a person has of other nations, countries, cultures. So 'imagology' refers to that part of the sciences that deals with these notions" (Soenen 1997: 126). According to Soenen, while it would not be apt to regard imagology as a science in its own right, it does interrelate with other disciplines such as "ethnological psychology, comparative literature and translation studies" (ibid.). In addition to what Soenen pointed out, Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu posits that imagology "investigates the genesis of 'the image of

the other”, and “as well as the socio-cultural constraints influential upon its creation and transformation processes, it tries to highlight these complex phenomena” (Kuran-Burçoğlu 2000: 144). Imagological analyses tend to be beneficial in different aspects of various disciplines. This study discusses the relation between image, translation and reception. Kuran-Burçoğlu emphasizes that image and imagological analyses should be included in the scope of Translation Studies because the image has a significant part in the translation phenomena (Burçoğlu 2000: 144). Kuran-Burçoğlu also highlights that “translations in turn may have an initiating, formative or transforming effect on the emerging or already existing image of the other” (2000: 144-145). Therefore, translation remains one of the important participants in the image-shaping process.

It seems evident that not only the person herself/himself creates her/his own image but also other factors, directly or indirectly, influence the image-shaping process. When the subject is the authorial image, it can be argued that the image of an author is composed of the author’s self-representation of herself/himself, the traits attributed to that particular author by literary professionals and the extratextual materials available on both the author’s literature and her/his private life. These components indicate that the authorial image, shaped within a particular culture, cannot be separated from the reception of the author’s literary works: the traits attributed to the author and the extratextual materials indicate how

the author's literary works were received in that particular culture. Stella Linn points out that "the image readers form of an author almost inevitably influences the reception of his or her work" (Linn 2003: 57). But I think the reception of an author's literary works, too, has a significant influence on the way her/his authorial image is constructed. Therefore, in my view, the focus should be on the dynamics between the authorial image and the reception of the author's literature. To come to terms with the ongoing interaction between the reception of the author's literature and her/his authorial image, the role of the extratextual sources and the literary professionals ("rewriters" in André Lefevere's terms), in the image-shaping process should be closely analyzed.

1.1.4. The role of the "rewriters" and "rewritings" in the Image-shaping process

The processes of reception and image-shaping are affected by a number of factors. In the first place, the role of literary professionals can be considered the most striking. Each literary text is open to a variety of readings and interpretations; thus, readers whether professional or non-professional, form their own reception and authorial image. However, it can be argued that the reception of the non-professional readers might be affected by the rewritings of the literary professionals to a certain extent:

the literary professionals create an overall reception of the writer's work and construct an image of the author, then present it to the public.

According to André Lefevere:

The non-professional reader increasingly does not read literature as written by its writers, but as rewritten by its rewriters...In the past, as in the present, rewriters created images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre sometimes even a whole literature. The images existed side by side with the realities they competed with, but the images always tended to reach more people than the corresponding realities did and they most certainly do so now (Lefevere 1992: 4-5).

In accordance with Lefevere's speculation, it can be claimed that non-professional readers tend to adopt a second-hand reception of a text instead of forming their own. In this case, the responsibility of the rewriters multiplies since their reviews directly affect the survival of a particular literary work.

Besides, rewriters can create an image of an author either in relation to current ideology or the poetics of the period. The authorial image created by the rewriters may comply with some requests or conditions. For instance, the brief biographical information about authors which appear in anthologies, encyclopedias or reading collections published for educational purposes can reveal the ideological, economical, sociological, educational and literary dynamics of a particular culture and period.

Secondly, rewritings or in Gideon Toury's words "extratextual sources, such as statements made by translators, editors, publishers and other participants involved in the translation act" (Toury 1995: 65) are the determining factors in the image-shaping process. The extratextual materials can be distinguished as paratexts, including "prefaces, postfaces, titles, dedications, illustrations and a number of other in-between phenomena that mediate between the text and the reader and serve to 'present' the work (Genette 1997: 1) and metatexts or "epitexts" as Genette states (Genette 1997: 5), which cover interpretations and comments on the text or the author but are presented independently (Hermans 1999: 85). Similar to Lefevere's argument about rewriters Stella Linn posits, "An essential factor that helps shape an author's image in the target culture(s) is indeed the representation of the author and his or her work through translations and metatextual or paratextual commentaries, such as prefaces and notes by the translator, the editor, or another authoritative source" (Linn 2003: 67). For instance, a paratextual feature written on the cover page of a novel revealing that it has been awarded for a notable literary prize (such as The Nobel Prize, The Pulitzer Prize, etc.) or a metatext such as a review appeared in a widely-known literary magazine (such as *The New York Times Book Review*, *World Literature Today*, etc.) makes it more attractive and mostly prestigious, it does of no

great importance whether or not the reader has any information about the author and/or the subject of the novel.

The importance of the extratextual materials increases when the subject we focus on is the reception of a translated text. As Stella Linn notes, “[w]hen it comes to translation, the target audience tends to be more dependent on external information supplied about the source text author” and obviously the texts itself (Linn 2003: 58). For example, Saliha Paker’s introductions to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* give insight into Latife Tekin’s life and literature. The introductions are undeniably informative for the target audience who has little or no background on Tekin and her literature. According to Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar “paratexts too can offer valuable insight into the production and reception of translated texts” (*Italics mine* Tahir-Gürçağlar 2002: 44). Paratextual elements constitute the first step of the reception of a translated text because paratexts – like prefaces, postfaces or footnotes – reflect, to a certain extent, the authorial image and how the original text was received in the source culture as well as how this reception affects the presentation of the translated text in the target culture(s). For instance, the publisher’s note appeared on the back cover page of the English translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) might be regarded as a reflection of the interaction between the source and target culture(s) reception (see section 3.1.2, Chapter 3).

Metatexts such as reviews, critical articles, interviews, bibliographies etc. that appear in literary journals, magazines and newspapers, etc. also reflect the target culture(s) reception of the translated text and the authorial image shaped within the target culture(s).

As mentioned above, translation is the most “recognizable” and “influential” type of rewriting because of its ability to “project the image of an author in another culture” (Lefevere 1992: 9). Which works of which author are to be translated? How is the author presented in paratexts and metatexts? The answers to these questions not only highlight the dynamics in the source and target culture(s), which pave the way for translations, but also play a credible role in the construction of the author's image in the target culture(s). In addition to this, the translator's role in the image-shaping process - as the most influential rewriter and intercultural agent - who transmits a text from one culture to another, has to be taken into consideration. Similar to this viewpoint is Stella Linn's argument which points out the leading role that translators have in shaping the authorial image: “For their part, translators may influence the construction of the author's image, not only by selecting and presenting certain source texts while excluding others, but also by conforming to textual-linguistic norms, for example by highlighting or manipulating semantic or stylistic features” (Linn 2003: 67). Thus, it seems clear that the translators' role in the image-shaping process is not limited to the act

of translation itself: the role involves pre-translation and post-translation stages. The translator may be the initiator of the translation process and determine the “preliminary norms” (Toury 1995: 58) including the selection of the text for translation into a specific language. If we assume that the translator is the person who initiates the process of translation, then the selection of the text for translation seems to be significant because the selection will be the result of the translator’s own reception of the particular text. Likewise, the translator’s reception of the author has a considerable influence in constructing an image for the particular author in the target culture(s). The translator’s leading role in the image-shaping process continues even after the act of translation comes to an end. The translator’s role in the post-translation stage may even include “the business of finding publishers” (Paker 2000: 623) in the target culture(s). Attending promotion tours, book fairs or seminars and presenting the translated text in public and in the media are some of the acts of the translator in the post-translation stage, thus having considerable influence on both the reception of the translated text and the construction of the authorial image.

Consequently, translators – like other rewriters – are credible mediators in constructing the authorial image. It may be argued that rewriters have the power to manipulate writers and their works, thus they – to a certain extent – are effective both in the process of reception and in

image-shaping. As Lefevere notes, “Whether they produce translations, literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions, rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time” (Lefevere 1992: 8).

1.2. Methodology

In this study I have applied an empirical research method. In *The Map*, a guide to research in translation studies, Jenny Williams and Andrew Chesterman state that “empirical research seeks new data, new information derived from the observation of data and from experimental work; it seeks evidence which supports or disconfirms hypotheses or generates new ones” (Williams and Chesterman 2002: 58). Empirical research is the basis of the methodological framework of this study, yet at the same time I have tried to conceptualize the findings of the research by interpreting the observable data.

Since this study aims to analyze the reception of Latife Tekin’s literary works and her authorial image within the source and target culture(s), I collected the data composed of book reviews and critical articles, in particular, which appeared in a number of newspapers and

periodicals intended for both a literary and a mass audience, published in the source and target culture(s). The Internet also provided me with considerable data for my survey. A particular number of reviews and critical articles which appeared in the source culture date back to the 1980s, to the years when Tekin's first four novels were published. Thus, the survey covers the data from the 1980s onwards. The method applied in this study can also be regarded as archival research which is based on "the exploration, analysis and interpretation of existing documentary and other information" (Williams and Chesterman 2002: 67). Describing and explaining the data, I will try to find out how Latife Tekin's works have been received in the source and target culture(s), and what kind of authorial image has been constructed for Tekin.

1.3. Conclusion

Chapter 1 offered an outline of the theoretical and methodological framework of this study. I have discussed the role which the translator, the translation itself, and the extratextual materials play in the processes of reception and image shaping. I examined the concepts of "rewriting" (Lefevere 1992) and "interculture" (Pym 1998), which provide insight into the influence of translation and extratextual materials and the role which the translator plays in the process of reception.

Chapter 2

Reception of Latife Tekin's Literary Works in the Source Culture

2.1. Latife Tekin's Literary Profile

In this chapter I present a general overview of Latife Tekin's literary works and focus on the features attributed to the writer by Turkish literary critics who play an important role in the reception of Tekin's literary works in the source culture. First of all, I would like to touch upon the history of the Turkish novel and dwell on Latife Tekin's position in this history.

According to Berna Moran (see Moran 1998) – a notable Turkish literary critic – the history of the Turkish novel can be divided into four periods. The first era, from *Tanzimat* to the 1950s, the often-recurring topic of the Turkish novel was East-West dichotomy and the themes basically focused on modernization and Westernization. The second era, from 1950 to the military coup of March 12 1971, which Moran called the era of the Anatolian Novel, dealt with the unjust social system and class struggle. The main themes were the oppressed villagers' struggle with the landlords and the government. The Anatolian Novel can also be referred to as the Village Novel⁷ and Yaşar Kemal's literary works can be

⁷ The Village Novel is a genre in Turkish fiction, which was rooted in the 1950s. Citing from Saliha Paker "In 1950, a school teacher by the name of Mahmut Makal published *Bizim Köy* (*Our Village*), a narrative account of his village in Niğde. It was an unassuming piece, but the first of its kind to attract immediate attention to the hardships of rural life in Turkey. [...] The immediate impact of Mahmut Makal's narrative focused literary attention upon rural life and eventually gave rise to the so-called Village Novel, a genre that was to dominate realistic fiction, rural or urban" (Paker 2001:9).

considered one of the most beautiful examples of the Anatolian Novel. The third era, which Moran called the March 12 Novel describes the period between the two military coups March 12 1971 and September 12 1980. The March 12 Novel portrayed the unjust society just like the Anatolian Novel, but with a clear difference in setting. In the March 12 Novel an urban setting was in the foreground and the main themes appeared as social reality and political struggle. Moreover, this was the era in which women writers started to be seen in the literary environment. The fourth era of the Turkish novel started after the 1980s. This was the period in which examples of the Postmodern Novel appeared in Turkish literature. The Turkish novel was inevitably influenced by the wave of postmodern literature which mostly criticized realistic literature. The Postmodern Novel of the 1980s had neither a chronologically developed plot nor a sequence of events reflecting causality. Language and style were freed from their boundaries as some experimental works were produced in that era. In addition, it should be noted that women writers became firmly established in this last period. Thus, Latife Tekin can be regarded as one of the representatives of the recent era of the Turkish novel.

Latife Tekin was born in 1957 in Karacefenk, Kayseri. She migrated to İstanbul with her family when she was nine. In describing the influence of migration on her life she reports, "In 1966 I came to live in

Istanbul. It felt like a sharp pain that split up my childhood. Unfulfilled dreams tore me apart from the people that I grew up with. My father quickly became working-class then gradually fell into unemployment. Three brothers worked on construction sites. I finished high school, slipping away like a trembling shadow from seven brothers and sisters”⁸ (Paker 2001:8). It can be claimed that the influence of migration with its causes and effects on inner and external worlds of human beings are widely depicted in her writing. Latife Tekin started writing *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) “after the military coup in 1980 – almost right after the next morning – in the back room of her house” (Tekin 2002a: 23). She says of her own background: ‘I am of the generation which found itself in the middle of the political battle the minute I stepped out of childhood’⁹. In this way, her writing acquires its political aspects.

Latife Tekin first appeared on the Turkish literary scene in 1983 with her first novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) that was received with great interest. After the publication of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*), Latife Tekin was described as a “distinctive” (Belge 1984a: 27) woman writer who has “an original voice” (Erol n.d.: 7, Paker 1993). Thus, it can be claimed that Tekin’s literary works brought a new perspective to Turkish fiction. In 1984 *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*

⁸ Introduction to the English translation of Latife Tekin’s first novel entitled *Dear Shameless Death*.

⁹ Marion Boyars Publishers: New books and complete backlist Sept. 1998 - Sept. 1999 catalogue.

(*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*) followed *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) and achieved a great success which again shook the literary environment. Then, she wrote *Gece Dersleri* (1986) (*Night Lessons*¹⁰), *Buzdan Kılıçlar* (1989) (*Swords of Ice*)¹¹, *Aşk İşaretleri* (1995) (*Signs of Love*)¹², *Gümüşlük Akademisi* (1997) (*The Academy*)¹³, *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* (2001) (*No Death in the Woods*)¹⁴ and finally *Unutma Bahçesi* (2004), (*The Garden of Forgetting*)¹⁵. An autobiographical account which focuses mainly on her novels and their Turkish reception is to be found in *Latife Tekin Kitabı* 2005.

2.2. Reception of Tekin's works in the source culture

2.2.1. *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*)

Sevgili Arsız Ölüm (*Dear Shameless Death*) was first published in 1983 and a series of book reviews and criticisms reveal that the novel¹⁶ triggered various discussions and commentaries in the Turkish literary scene. For instance, Murat Belge in one of his reviews of the book, notes

¹⁰ An extract from *Night Lessons* was translated into English by Aron R. Aji and published in *Grand Street* in 1998.

¹¹ *Swords of Ice* is the English translation of the title by Saliha Paker.

¹² Translation mine

¹³ *The Academy* was translated by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne and published in *Translation Review* in 2004.

¹⁴ Translation mine.

¹⁵ Translation by Saliha Paker.

¹⁶ Some of the literary critics discuss whether *Dear Shameless Death* is a novel or a narrative. For instance Cengiz Gündoğdu, Mustafa Sercan and Atilla Birkiye discuss this point and Mustafa Sercan points out there exists an uncertainty about the genre and alludes to the difficulty of defining *Dear Shameless Death* as a novel (Gündoğdu et al. 1985:10). However in this thesis *Dear Shameless Death* and other literary works of Latife Tekin are considered as novels.

that “Latife Tekin’s novel started to be discussed widely within a short time”¹⁷ (Belge 1984a: 27) [Latife Tekin’in romanı kısa zamanda oldukça yaygın bir şekilde tartışılmaya başlandı] and Onat Kutlar states that “Latife Tekin’s novel has become one of the most beautiful surprises of this year, firstly for readers and for critics and other writers as well” (Kutlar 1984a: 26) [Latife Tekin’in romanı, başta biz okurlar için olmak üzere, eleştirmen ve öbür yazarlar için de son yılların en güzel sürprizlerinden biri oldu]. Regarding these views it can be noted that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* appeared to be one of the main topics of literary discussions.

Berna Moran (Moran 2001: 75) states that the publication of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) precipitated numerous debates in the Turkish literary world. On the one hand, it received several positive criticisms, which praised the novel, but on the other hand the novel was heavily criticized in negative terms. Onat Kutlar (Kutlar 1984a: 26) points out that some of the debates or criticisms deviated from the novel itself and considered the writer and her life as an “issue” because the critics were confused about the success of the twenty-five year old woman writer. To the literary critics’ astonishment, that twenty-five year old woman writer who was born in a village and grew up in İstanbul under harsh conditions depicted her story with a distinguished use of language and narrative. Therefore, it is not surprising that Tekin’s *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* became a controversial text in the source literary environment.

¹⁷ All translations in this thesis are my own unless indicated otherwise.

Toktamış Ateş affirms this point with a constructive tone noting that both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* achieved a great success although they were produced under difficult circumstances and at a very young age (Ateş 1985: 16). Accordingly, it can be claimed that no one expected such a literary work and success from this young woman writer; therefore, first impressions of the critics about Tekin and her novel were uncertain.

Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) novel "is a fictional account of her childhood and adolescence" (Paker 1991: 291), thus it has an autobiographical perspective (Özkırımlı 1983, Kutlar 1984a: 26, İlhan 1984: 80, Tekin 1984c: 83, Erol n.d.). It narrates the story of a family whose life starts in a village called Alacüvek and continues in an unnamed city. Saliha Paker describes *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* as "an individual and subtly intuitive quest" of the writer and notes that "Going back to her roots in the village and to the uprooting that followed upon the migration to the big city, [Latife Tekin] explores her personal world of jinn and fairies, of inanimate objects that came to life for her and her relations with her villagers and family and, in particular, with her mother" (Paker 1991: 291). Migrating to a big city divides their life into two major episodes. The novel starts with a depiction of the father, Huvat, as a man who brings new objects to the village:

Huvat Aktaş traveled for a whole day and a night, ending his journey at noon by the sheepfold in the village of Alacüvek. This time he brought a bright blue bus with him...Of all the novelties

Huvat had brought to the village up until then; the bus was undoubtedly the best. The first time he had shown up with a stove...But the villagers were so uninterested in the stove that Huvat lost his temper...But one day he did show up again, this time with an enormous box under his arm. It was a talking box and all of Alacüvek was thrown into an uproar over it...But it wasn't long before Huvat arrived with something that made them forget all about the talking box. This time it was a woman, with flame-red cheeks and milky skin. And her head and legs were bare" (Tekin 2001: 19-20).

Atiye is one of the new 'things', which Huvat brought to the village, and the woman grabs the villagers attention because she is different in appearance from the other women in the village. Huvat and Atiye start a family and Atiye gives birth to Nuğber, Seyit, Halit, Dirmit and Mahmut. Tekin continues to portray their migration to a big city and aspects of their ordinary lives which are composed of their struggle with urban life. Fairy tales, djinns and magic surround their ordinary lives. One of the main characters in the novel, Atiye, struggling with unfamiliar city life, tries to find comfort with the help of superstitious elements. As Berna Moran points out, Latife Tekin employs the features of folk literature in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (Moran 2001: 79). Thus it can be claimed that Tekin's interweaving narrative takes its roots from Turkish folk culture and literature.

A criticism by Cengiz Bektaş states, "Most of our writers including Latife Tekin lack the notion of place in their writing" (Bektaş 1985: 15) [Bizim pek çok yazarımızda yok mekan duygusu]. This point observed by Cengiz Bektaş apparently seems to be relevant for Tekin's narrative

because, there is a clear indefiniteness of space in Tekin's novels. As a matter of fact there must be a reason behind the indefiniteness of space, and Tekin, herself, explains in an interview that "she aims to be universal" with the absence of space (Tekin 1984b: 80). As for Berna Moran, indefiniteness of space with other concepts, indicate Tekin's choice of adapting folk literature features in her narrative, rather than the characteristics of the classical novel, "When we analyze *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* we see that the writer tried a new approach to the basic features of the novel like time and space, description, plot and characters, and this new approach has benefited from our folk literature...Our fairy tales, myths and epics are also silent about time and space" (Moran 2001: 75) [*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'ü incelediğimizde, zaman ve mekan, betimleme, olay örgüsü ve karakter gibi temel roman öğelerine yeni bir yaklaşım denendiğini ve bu konuda halk edebiyatından yararlanmaya çalışıldığını görürüz...Bizim de masallarımız olsun, efsanelerimiz, halk hikayelerimiz olsun, zaman ve mekan konusunda suskundurlar]. Furthermore, Sema Aslan, a researcher from Başkent University, emphasizes the similarity of Tekin's work to one of the significant epics *Dede Korkut Destanı* (Dede Korkut Stories)¹⁸. Aslan states, "In the novel, the life of the Aktaş family in the village and the painful realities they experience in the city are depicted in a fantastic manner which includes the motifs of folk literature as well. *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* carries traces of one of the most important works of

¹⁸ "Dede Korkut Stories" is the English translation by Sema Aslan.

Turkish folk literature, the Dede Korkut Stories” (Aslan 2002: 1). Regarding these reviews it can be stated that the criticisms and interpretations claim that Latife Tekin’s narrative has similarities with folk literature. Another point stated by Atilla Özkırımlı also tends to support the idea. As Özkırımlı puts it, the novel itself is a “novel of action” (Özkırımlı 1983) and Berna Moran supports Özkırımlı’s viewpoint stating that:

As we know that in modern novel which focuses not on the action but the characters, the characters’ psychology, their inner worlds, their conscious and subconscious contain many questions that the writer endeavors to solve. Therefore, it becomes a significant component of the modern novel. However, what matters in folk literature are not the inner worlds of the characters but rather their actions. (Moran 2001: 77)

[Eyleme değil, karaktere ağırlık veren modern ve modernist romanda biliyoruz ki roman kişilerinin psikolojisi, iç dünyası, bilinci ve bilinçaltı yazarın dikkatle çözmeye çalıştığı ilginç soruları içerir. Bundan ötürü önemli bir yönünü oluşturur romanın. Ama gene biliyoruz ki halk edebiyatı ürünlerinde önemli olan kişinin iç dünyası değil, tersine, eylemidir]

It can be inferred from Moran’s words that Tekin does not make in depth analyses on her characters’ psychology and inner worlds, yet she refers to their actions throughout the story. What matters most in Turkish folk literature is the actions of the characters not their personalities or inner worlds. Related to this, Moran states that the characters are the necessary medium for the action (ibid.). As Tekin makes use of Turkish folk literature elements in her narrative, it might be argued that the emphasis in her novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is mostly on the action.

Another positive comment on the novel is made by Atilla Özkırımlı who states that a common decision about the novel is 'interesting' (Özkırımlı 1983). There is no doubt that the novel was interesting and it attracted attention; yet, what were the reasons that caused the novel to be received in that way? What makes the novel interesting? As for Özkırımlı, the novel is interesting because it has no comparability with any other novel which depicts villagers or village life. The writer does not make use of the stereotypes of the village novel (ibid.). Schematic village type characters do not exist in Tekin's narrative; the novel merely describes a type of living (Özkırımlı 1983, Gündoğdu et al. 1985: 10).

As Tekin was born in a village and as her characters that she depicts in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* are also villagers, there was a tendency to categorize *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* as a village novel. Nevertheless, the novel, which portrays the life of a family, who migrated from a small village to a big city, has distinctive features when compared to traditional village novels. Regarding this point, Atilla İlhan points out the uniqueness of the novel with these words, "The Village novel has been degraded as a mere interview for the sake of social realism. However, [Tekin's] profile of Alacüvek seems to be an illumination" (İlhan 1984:80) [Toplumcu gerçekçilik adına, köy romanlarını nasıl da bir röportaj kuruluşuna indirmişlerdi! Şu senin Alacüvek kesitin yok mu, pırıltılı bitr tezkip adeta!].

Murat Belge also stresses the difference of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* from the Village Novel. Belge posits:

The Village novelist viewed the novel as a political act devoted to the explaining of rural reality to an urban audience for the purpose of transforming that reality. This pedagogical approach reflects an outsider's view of the village. The village novelist through his education has internalized the dominant ideology and assimilated the world-view of the urban intelligentsia. Consequently, he has externalized the reality into which he was born. However, Latife Tekin, the author of *Dear Impertinent Death*¹⁹, remains outside the 'Westernisation-Progress' paradigm. Her novel reflects a new reality, that of the social context of rural-urban migration... [Tekin's] novel represents an insider's view of Turkish rural life. (*Italics mine* Belge 1984b: 69)

It can be inferred from the above quotation, Murat Belge points out, that the novel was built on a different structure than the conventions of Turkish fiction (Belge 1984a: 27). *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was written with a new point of view (Belge 1998, Gürbilek 1999, Kutlar 1984a, Moran 2001, Noyan 1984). Regarding these criticisms it can be noted that Tekin created a new form and content which had never been done before.

Tekin's point of view is considered a significant feature of her success. With respect to Belge's viewpoint it can be inferred that Latife Tekin remains an insider as a novelist; therefore, she reflects the realities of rural or urban life with an insider's point of view. As regards this view it can be interpreted that the style of the narrator in the novel, which has been written with a third person point of view, is on the level of the

¹⁹ *Dear Impertinent Death* is the translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* by Murat Belge.

villagers of Alacüvek. In relation to these points, Onat Kutlar describes Latife Tekin's insider view as a "ground-level view", that is to say, Tekin looks at her characters and the world they live in from the ground-level (Kutlar 1984a: 26).

Another debate concerning *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* revolved around the fantastic aspect of the novel and its comparability with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's narrative style, particularly in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In an interview with Atilla Özkırımlı, Latife Tekin was asked about the writers who influenced her style and in reply she expresses her thoughts about Marquez as follows:

Marquez influenced me in a certain way. Let me explain: I was aware of the knowledge in me, I was feeling it but I couldn't find a way to transmit what I had inside. I guess Marquez inspired me with a little reading of his works. However, I believe that I could change that Marquezian influence into something else in my novel. (Tekin 1984a: 6)

[Marquez beni bir anlamda etkiledi. O da şu: Bir birikimin farkındaydım, seziyordum ama bu birikimi aktaracak bir yol bulamama durumundaydım. Sanıyorum Marquez bir yol açtı bana o kadarlık okumakla. Zaten Marquez'den alınacak etki, o kadarlık okumakla bile alınabilecek bir etkiydi. Yine de ben kitabımın belli bir yerinden sonra Marquez etkisini başka bir şeye dönüştürdüğüm kanısındayım]

Fantasy may be accepted as a significant feature of Latin American and the Marquezian novel and it seems evident that Tekin makes use of fantasy and employs magical realism as a narrative technique in which reality and fantasy are closely interwoven. Therefore, the tendency to

claim that Tekin has been influenced by the Latin American novel is not surprising. However there exist sound perspectives on the differences between Marquez's fantasy and Tekin's fantasy. As Onat Kutlar puts it:

What affected us in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) is not the influence of Marquez or the writer's ability to turn daily realism into fantasy but a right and conscious choice...Tekin looks through the eyes of her people and their world. This is not turning daily realism to fantasy but to reveal the riches embodied in reality, which at times goes beyond imagination. Fairies and djinns that frequently appear in the novel are not the fantasy of the writer but the reality of everyday life (Kutlar 1984a: 26).

[*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'de bizi etkileyen özellikler, kimi ünlü yazarların (Örneğin Marquez) etkilerinden, günlük gerçeğin bir fantezi ve düş dünyasına dönüştürülmesinden değil, doğru ve bilinçli bir seçimden kaynaklanmaktadır [...]] Tekin kişilerine ve onların dünyasına bakıyor. Bu günlük gerçeğin fantezi'ye dönüştürülmesi değil, gerçeğin kendisinde varolan ve çoğu kez düşgücü'nü aşan zenginliğin ortaya çıkarılmasıdır. Romanda çokça yer alan cinler, periler, yazarın fantezisi değil, ülkemizde yaşanan 'günlük gerçekliğin' parçalarıdır]

In relation to Onat Kutlar's perspective Murat Belge notes that "[...] Fantasy in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* exists in persons' minds. Tekin doesn't alter the empirical reality of the world [...] the characters live in a fantastic world which is composed of djinns and fairies and they never doubt that they are real" (Belge 1984a: 27) [*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'de fantezi, dikkat edilirse, kişilerin zihninde vardır. Latife Tekin dünyanın ampirik gerçekliğini değiştirmiyor]. As it was mentioned earlier Tekin's narrative takes its roots from Turkish folk literature and she benefits from epics and fairy tales, that is to say the various genres of oral tradition in Turkish

literature. She makes use of the characters of oral tradition such as fairies and djinns which are the traces of Islamic tradition. Tekin's fantasy is connected with the reality of folk culture and literature as Murat Belge asserts:

[...] The fantasy element, which her novel embodies, is not one that signifies 'retreatism'. Hers is a fantasy with definite social roots. In this sense, Latife Tekin's novel cannot be called an imitation of the Latin American novel. It is more authentic than the undigested 'realism' of the 'Westernisation-progress' paradigm. As for the influence of the Latin American novel on her writing, it is one of adopting an aesthetic form, employed by Latin novelists, in order to express a new reality. (Belge 1984b: 69)

Sema Aslan correspondingly states that the fantasy Tekin employs in her novel is not a fantasy which is distinguished from reality, "*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is a novel which uses the transition from the real to the fantasy frequently, without the intervention of the narrator to distinguish the real from fantasy... [T]he reader does not question the reality of those elements of fantasy which are revealed through the viewpoint of the characters living in the village, because the villagers have a tendency to believe in such fantasies" (Aslan 2002: 1). All of these judgments indicate that fantasy in Latife Tekin's novel is the reflection of the reality and has a distinctive aspect in relation to Turkish folk and Islamic culture and social structure.

Apart from positive criticisms and debates, a negative criticism about *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) arose in relation to the concept of realism. As Berna Moran puts, "Some literary professionals

who are against the novel criticize it for being unrealistic. They note that the characters are not remote from the realities of Turkish society but the narrative seems to be unreal” (Moran 2001: 75). In addition to that, Cengiz Gündoğdu in his review notes that Tekin’s narrative is “far from reality” (Gündoğdu et.al. 1985: 10) and Osman Abbasoğlu asks “whether the fantasy and folkloric features she employs in her narrative help her to reflect reality or not?” (Abbasoğlu 1985: 44). In fact, it can be concluded from the statements, that both the positive and the negative criticisms are directed for the very same characteristic of Tekin’s narrative: Fantastic elements/Magical Realism. Some of the critics praise Tekin’s narrative, finding it innovative and provocative since she uses a new technique, while others discredit her works as she defies the conventions of her profession.

2.2.2. *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları (Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills)*

It was mentioned above that when *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* appeared in 1983, it captured the attention of not just the general public but also the literary professionals. The Turkish literary scene was astonished by her magical narrative which broke from the conventional, stereotypical social realistic novel tradition. Latife Tekin became the main subject of the debates on literature for some time. Some of the critics praised her writing and style,

whereas her narrative was criticized negatively by others. The success of the twenty-five year old young woman writer was conceived of a surprise both in a positive and negative sense and most of the critics wondered whether her achievement was coincidental or not. In spite of the criticisms either positive or negative, the literary world was waiting for Tekin's second book so they could better evaluate the narrative and literary value of her works. There was a question in the minds of the critics - what would she do next? A criticism published in *Nokta* illustrates the point:

The first step Latife Tekin took into the Turkish literary environment was received both with suspicion and enthusiasm. Most of the people who read *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* accepted that this girl, affected by the world of djinns in which she lived, became a controversial figure with her first novel, but at the same time they wondered whether she would be able to produce another novel or not. (*Nokta* 1984: 62)

[Latife Tekin'in, edebiyat dünyasının çifte payandalı, çifte kilitli kapısından attığı ilk adım hem coşku, hem kuşkuyla karşılanmıştı. *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*'ü bitirip kapatan herkes bir ihtiyat payı koyuyor ve aynı şeyi söylüyordu: Evet, bu 'cinli kız' romanda bir olaydı. Ama bakalım soluğu ne kadardı?]

It seems obvious that the literary professionals in the source culture were curious about her next work and wondered whether she could manage to retain the success or not. Toktamış Ateş also notes that he was waiting for Tekin's second novel:

The expected (or at least expected by me?) second book *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* was published last year. Garbage Tales with its observation, its comfort in narrative

and its balance, which is open to discussion, is a very valuable contribution in reflecting the different aspects of Turkish social life. (Ateş 1985: 16)

[Beklenen, (ya da en azından benim merakla beklediğim) ikinci kitap, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* geçtiğimiz yılın sonlarında yayınlandı [...] Çöp Masalları gerek gözlemiyle, gerek anlatım rahatlığıyla ve gerekse (tartışmaya çok açık olan) dengesiyle, Türkiye'nin toplumsal yaşamının değişik yönlerini yansıtmaya açısından bence çok değerli bir çıkış oldu]

Curiosity was not only about the success of the expected novel but as Onat Kutlar puts it “The biggest danger waiting for Latife Tekin was not a failure of a new novel but a repetition of the previous one” (Kutlar 1984b) [Latife Tekin'i, ilk romanından sonra bekleyen en büyük tehlike, yeni bir denemenin başarısızlığı değil, beğenilen yapının bir biçimde tekrarlanması idi]. The answers to questions about Tekin's second novel were soon met and Latife Tekin's second novel *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*) was published in 1984.

In *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, Latife Tekin tells the amazing story of a group of rural migrants who build a shanty-town in a garbage dump and their experiences in trying to adapt to urban life. The novel was not a repetition of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and as Onat Kutlar notes “[...] it brought fresh and imaginative point of views and narrative techniques” (Kutlar 1984b) [*Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, bir çok yönden, yepyeni bakış açıları, taptaze teknikler getiriyor]. It can be stated that the main difference

between the two novels is their point of views. In *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, Tekin writes as an insider; yet in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* she both writes as an insider and becomes the voice of a third eye which observes everything from the outside. She transforms her ground-level view to a bird's eye view and that is why, possibly, that she reflects the power of the wind throughout the novel. However, she preserves her position as an insider because, as Tekin herself puts it, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* is a production of some first-hand experiences in the squatter settlements:

I went to shanty-towns (gecekondu) when I was politically active. I encountered immigrants like myself and wished that my father had brought us such a place, so I could be protected more easily. Belonging to a shanty-town...I chose this presence willingly as a political identity. A choice stemmed from a will to correct my father's wrong foresight about our future. One winter day I was walking looking at the hills of shanty-towns and then I saw garbage shining on the hillsides. I was charmed. Then I realized that was the moment that I was destined to write a novel. I was cold and the cold air made me dream and that dream took me to some unimaginable places. At that moment those shanty-towns appeared beautiful to me. I could not have managed to write *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* otherwise. (Tekin 2002a: 24)

[Ben politik çalışmaya başladığım dönemde gecekondu'lara gittim. Kendi benzerlerimle karşılaştım orda, göçüp gelmiş insanlar, "keşke babam bizi bir gecekondu mahallesine getirseydi, böyle bir yerde daha kolay korunurdum" diye düşündüm. Gecekondululuk... Bunu ben bile isteye, politik bir kimlik olarak seçtim. Babamın geleceğimizle ilgili yanlış öngörüsünü düzeltme isteğinden kaynaklanan bir seçim. Bir kış günü, gecekondu'larla kaplı tepelere bakarak yürüyordum, yamaçlarda parlayan çöpleri gördüm, büyüledim. Ağır büyülenme!.. Sonradan kendi kendime, bir roman yazmak için çarpıldığım andı bu dedim. Üşümüştüm, çok soğuktu,

soğuktan düş gördüm ve gördüğüm düş beni düşünülmedik düşüncelere götürdü. Herkesin yıkılıp yerine toplu konutların yapılmasını söylediği mahalleler bana dehşetli güzel geldi o an işte. *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*’nı başka türlü yazamazdım]

These words reveal Tekin’s motivation which made her write *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*. Tekin’s own familiarity with squatter communities and the observation that she made in the shanty-towns enabled her to write her novel from an insider’s point of view. Tekin’s experiences in the shanty-towns create a false image of her: In the source culture, there exists a tendency to define Tekin as an insider because she herself had lived in a squatter community. However, as opposed to the general knowledge, Latife Tekin did not indeed live in a squatter settlement or a shanty-town. When she, with her family, migrated to İstanbul from Kayseri, they settled in Beşiktaş like most of the immigrants who came from Kayseri. Thus, her first-hand experiences about squatter settlements are not because she lived in such a community, but rather because of her observations and experiences in squatter communities as a political activist. This point is not made evident in the source culture reception of Tekin’s literature. However, in her introduction to *Dear Shameless Death* Saliha Paker clarifies this point: “Latife and her family came to live in [İstanbul], not in the squatter huts, described in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, built overnight, but in the derelict wooden mansions in an old neighbourhood of Beşiktaş, near the Yıldız Palace overlooking the Marmara mouth of the Bosphorus”

(Paker 2001: 11). Although Tekin did not live in a *gecekondu*, it seems evident that she never considered it a disadvantaged “other” to city and never underestimated the contributions of the people living in the squatter settlements.

It can be claimed that some of the critics who were waiting for Tekin’s second novel were not satisfied with some aspects of the work. The discussions whether Tekin’s narrative could be accepted as novel or not persisted. Müge Canpolat notes that “*Berci Kristin* was criticized by most of the writers and the criticisms were mainly focused on the structure of the novel” (Canpolat 2001:61) [*Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, bir çok yazar tarafından eleştirilmiştir. Eleştirilerin daha çok eserin yapısına odaklandığı dikkat çeker]. In *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, as with *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, reality and fantasy are closely interwoven and Tekin makes use of the motifs of folk literature. The features attributed to the classical novel do not apply to *Berji Kristin*. Therefore, those who make their evaluations according to the schemas of traditional novels do not define *Berji Kristin* as a novel. According to Füsün Akatlı, *Berji Kristin* is certainly not a novel but just a collection of stories and fairy tales (Akatlı 1984:46) [Bu yapıt kesinlikle roman değildir...Öykücükler, meseller, adında ifade edildiği üzere: Masallar...olabilir]. Emin Özdemir also states that *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* cannot be anything than a fairy tale (Özdemir 1985: 7) [Masalımsı kalıplar içinde dönenip duruyor...Kestirmecesi masaldan

öteye geçemiyor]. Likewise, Semih Gümüş criticizes the structure of the novel and he claims that *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* does not have totality in its style and that is the main reason which makes *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* not functioning as a novel (Gümüş 1991: 110) [*Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*’nda...bütüncül bir yapıdan söz edilemez. Onu romandan uzaklaştıran asıl neden bu sayılabilir]. As a reply to Gümüş Müge Canpolat on the other hand, states, “*Berci Kristin* is a narrative in its totality, yet it is not organic. In order to be organic, it should indicate the harmony between language, themes, characters and plot. Nevertheless, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* has an episodic structure and that is why it cannot be defined as a novel” (Canpolat 2001: 61) [*Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* bütüncül bir eserdir. Ama organik değildir. Organik olmak, eserdeki dil, konu, kişiler ve olay örgüsü arasındaki uyumu imler. Oysa *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*’nda episodik bir yapı vardır. Bence metni romandan uzaklaştıran asıl neden bu yapıdır]. The first discussions on *Berci Kristin* seem to deal with the characteristics that make a literary piece a “novel” and the ways in which Tekin’s work fit into this categorization. The critics agree on the point that the structure of *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* is remote from being a novel but they disagree with one another’s reasons. Regarding this discussion, Saliha Parker makes a significant point and refers to an interview made with Latife Tekin. She notes that “Tekin openly rejects a ‘realistic’ mode of expression which is

clear, calm, condescending and without anger” (Paker 1991: 290) and highlights the originality of Tekin’s narrative: “Each of her books, the first published in 1983, is a challenge in itself: none of them fits in with the dominant mode of realism, nor are they ‘novels’ (despite the publishers subtitle) in the traditional form” (ibid.). Paker’s statements are striking because her words distinguish the difference between post/modern novel and ‘novel in traditional form’. Thus, she expands the definition of the novel and Tekin’s works find a place within her framework of ‘novel’.

Another facet of Tekin’s narrative which breaks the conventions of the classical novel, is that there is no single protagonist in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*. Mediha Göbenli points out that “There is no protagonist in *Berci Kristin* but there exists a spectrum of characters” (Göbenli 2001: 36) [*Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*’nda kahraman yoktur, fakat karakterlerin çokluğu/zenginliği geniş bir yelpazayı içerir]. Regardless of the absence of a major character, each character has his/her own story; moreover they all have a common story which is the tale of the Flower Hill as a protagonist. Therefore, the protagonist in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* can be regarded as Çiçektepe (Flower Hill) (Canpolat 2001: 61, *Nokta* 1984: 62, Kutlar 1984b).

The fantastic and ironic tales of Flower Hill and the squatter community settled on that hill represent a social reality of urban life. As Erhan Acar puts, “This humble bouquet of shanty town tales which Tekin

put before our door, extensively portrays the specific and international aspects of urbanization in Turkey” (Acar 1985: 107) [Latife Tekin’in masal diye kapımıza bıraktığı bu alçakgönüllü konu öyküleri demeti, Türkiye’deki kentleşme ve gecekondulaşma sürecinin özgül ve evrensel boyutlarını şimdiye kadar az rastlanmış bir kapsamlılık ve derinlikte bütünleştiriyor]. In relation to what Acar notes, Toktamış Ateş states that in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* Tekin hints at some significant aspects of Turkish social and political life (Ateş 1985: 17) [Latife Tekin’in Türk toplumsal ve siyasal yaşamının kimi kesitlerinin anlaşılabilmesi için ciddi ipuçları verdiği inaniyorum]. Tekin indicates a variety of social realities using magical realism as a narrative technique and, as “magical realism” denotes, a work can be both magical and realistic.

2.2.3. Gece Dersleri (Night Lessons)

Latife Tekin’s third novel *Gece Dersleri (Night Lessons)* depicts the memories, confessions and feelings of Gülfidan, a leftist, regarding her past. One of the important aspects of the novel which attracts the readers’ attention is its style. In *Gece Dersleri* Tekin employs a fragmented style with a challenging and imaginative narrative and a highly metaphorical language. Jale Parla, in the article “Yesem Örgütü Beş Defa Bir Demet Yasemenle” stresses that “Tekin’s *Gece Dersleri* has

been the most impressive example amidst Turkish fiction which stands against mimesis. Fragmentation in *Gece Dersleri* is seen first in language then in body, time, setting, and the voices which compound the narrative” (Parla 2000: 344-345) [Türk romanında temsile karşı yönelişin en etkileyici örneği olan anlatı, başka ilklerin de öncülüğünü yapmış bir yazarın, Latife Tekin’in *Gece Dersleri*’dir. *Gece Dersleri*’nde parçalanmışlık, herşeyden önce dilde, sonra bedende, zamanda, mekanda ve anlatıyı oluşturan seslerde görülür]. Since it is composed of various literary genres such as stories, poems, rhymes, diary notes, letters and dialogues, *Gece Dersleri* cannot simply be defined as a novel. Therefore, it would be inapt to evaluate the novel from a conventional perspective because it evidently breaks stereotypes and goes beyond the traditional Turkish Novel. Saliha Paker expresses, “Linear narrative is replaced by fragmented discourse, viewpoints shift and change, the language is densely metaphorical, at times lyrical, allowing for a multiplicity of readings” (Paker 1991: 292). It can be said that the narrative in *Gece Dersleri* has some similarities to the narrative technique applied in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*; that is, both of the novels have an episodic narrative. However, *Gece Dersleri* seems to be different from Tekin’s first two novels, particularly, in the use of language. With respect to the difference in the use of language Nurdan Gürbilek notes that:

I would like to note that refraction in *Gece Dersleri* first started in the language because it was *Gece Dersleri* in

which Tekin went beyond the limits of syntax and stereotyped expressions and opened her mind to the opportunities of a style, of a grammar rather than following a voice coming from her childhood. (Gürbilek 1999: 45)

[Ben *Gece Dersleri*'ndeki kırılmanın öncelikle dilde gerçekleştiğini söylemek istiyorum. Çünkü Tekin'in belli sözdizim yapılarının, kalıplaşmış ifadelerin dışına çıkması, çocukluğundan kulağında yer etmiş bir sese sadık kalmaya çalışmaktansa bir üsluba yönelmesi, bir dilin, bir dilbilgisinin imkanlarına doğru açılması *Gece Dersleri*'yle oldu]

Each novel by Latife Tekin reflects an original voice and point of view. For instance, in a conversation with Zeynep Avcı, Tekin emphasizes that she tries to catch a voice in each of her novels which leads her through the novel and the voice she tries to catch in *Gece Dersleri* is the voice of divine speech (Tekin 1985: 35) [Her kitapta bir ses yakalamaya çalışıyorum...*Gece Dersleri*'nde kutsal söylevlerin sesini yakalamaya çalıştım. Özellikler kitabın başlarında, o kutsal söylev ritmini duyarak yazdım]. According to Gürbilek, Tekin, “started to use a first-person point of view and to say ‘I’” in *Gece Dersleri* (Gürbilek 1999: 45) [Latife Tekin birinci tekil şahıs anlatıma, ‘ben’ demeye...*Gece Dersleri*'yle başladı]. Gürbilek points out that the magical murmur in *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* is transformed into a language in *Gece Dersleri* (ibid.). Thus, a concluding comment that in *Gece Dersleri* Tekin altered the previous techniques she employed would be apt.

The subject matter of *Gece Dersleri* became highly controversial in the source culture. The novel appeared to be a strong critique of the

Turkish left wing from an insider's perspective. *Gece Dersleri* discusses the inappropriate approach of the leftist organizations, or the whole Turkish left wing, towards impoverished people. Sibel Erol highlights that “*Gece Dersleri* criticizes leftist revolutionary politics for attempting to speak for the poor without knowing or understanding them, was attacked by leftist critics” (Erol 2001). Tekin expresses that their generation could not lead the political action in which they were included. On the contrary, they had to act as they were told to by the people who retain higher positions in the organizations (Tekin in Özer 2005: 92) [Harekete yön veren insanlar olmadık biz. Aşağı yukarı 20’li yaşlardaydık ve yukardan istenen şeyleri yapmakla yükümlüydük]. Tekin states that “I write for the destitute people and destitute people remain voiceless in political action, they do not have a language to express themselves. Few of them can become leaders and when they do they lose their own voice and start to speak with an alien and borrowed language” (Tekin in Özer 2005: 101) [...ben yoksullar hakkında yazıyorum, yoksullar politik hareket içinde dilsizler, kendilerini ifade edecek bir dilden yoksunlar. Çok az kişi politik hareket içinde lider konumuna gelebiliyor, o zaman da, kendileri gibi konuşamaz oluyorlar]. She asserts that she wrote *Gece Dersleri* with such a motivation in mind:

What we had been through in that period could not be expressed with a political language but it has to be told...”
(Tekin in Özer 2005: 93)

[Yaşadığımız şeyi politik sözcüklerle dile getirmem imkansızdı ama bir biçimde dile getirilmeliydi...]

When *Gece Dersleri* was published, it was harshly criticized by the leftist organization of which Tekin was a member. Afterwards the Turkish left and literary professionals engaged in a controversy over the book both from a political and literary perspective (Tekin in Özer 2005). *Gece Dersleri* became a polemical topic in the Turkish literary world and was exposed to ruthless attacks. *Küfür Romanları* by Yalçın Küçük, is the most striking example of these attacks to which Tekin was exposed after the publication of *Gece Dersleri*. Küçük criticizes both *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Gece Dersleri* at a superficial level in an offensive manner which, in my view, can be taken up as subject in studies on literary criticism. Apart from his criticisms of Tekin's novels, Küçük's style seems to be the most problematic issue in his book. Küçük states that "publication of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* surprises me; I cannot imagine how people write these [novels]" (Küçük 1986: 24) [*Sevgili Ölüm ve diğerlerinin yazılmasına şaşıyorum; insanlar, bunları, nasıl yazarlar, bir türlü cevabını bulamıyorum*]. He also states that *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, as well as some other novels, are disrespectful to the Turkish literature and criticizes the publishers for publishing these novels (Küçük 1986: 24) [*Şaşkınlığım burada bitmiyor; Türk yazınına büyük bir saygısızlık olmadan bunlar nasıl yayınlanır, yayınevleri bunları neden yayınlar bunu da anlamıyorum*]. He criticizes the language and the fragmented style which Tekin employs in

Gece Dersleri and claims that the fragmented format and episodic narrative of *Gece Dersleri* is nothing but a waste of paper (Küçük 1986: 72, 73, 74).

Alev Alatlı responded to Yalçın Küçük's harsh criticisms with her book *Aydın Despotizmi*, that was published in 1986. In her introduction Alatlı states that her main motivation for writing the book is that the inappropriate attitude of an "intellectual" who claims to have a standpoint on "Turkish aesthetics and fiction" but who criticizes Tekin's *Gece Dersleri* on insufficient and inappropriate evidence (Alatlı 2002: ix) [1986 Türkiye'sinde, Türkiye ilericiiliğinin önderlerinden, "bilim adamı" kimliği ile ünlü, etkin ve üretken bir Türk aydını, "Türk estetiği ve roman" konularındaki düşüncelerini anlatmayı vaat ettiği bir çalışmasında, genç bir yazarın, hemen her kitapçada bulunabilecek bir yapıtını, Latife Tekin'in *Gece Dersleri*'ni, yetersiz ya da bağlam dışı aktarmalar ve yorumlarla, yapıtta var olanı yok, yok olanı var ederek, kendi tezlerini doğrulayacağını umduğu biçimde ve okurlarının gözlerinin içine baka baka saptırmaktan zerre kadar utanç duymayabiliyor]. Tekin mentioned that the support which Alatlı gave her about *Gece Dersleri* was invaluable (Tekin in Özer 2005: 106).

Tekin states that "I believed and I still believe with all my heart that the Turkish left wing was supposed to discuss what I had discussed in *Gece Dersleri*" (Özer 2005: 91) [...ben Türk Sol Hareketi'nin *Gece*

Dersleri'nde tartıştığım şeyi tartışması gerektiğine yürekten inanıyordum, hala da inanıyorum]. In my view the criticisms which the novel received in the source culture reveal that not only the Turkish left but also the majority of the Turkish literary world was not ready to discuss this novel. However, *Gece Dersleri* strengthen Tekin's narrative in terms of the use of language and as Siber Erol points out "Tekin's critique of any ideology that claims to speak for others has led her to experiment with language since her first book" (Erol 2001).

2.2.4. *Buzdan Kılıçlar* (Swords of Ice)

*The souls of the poor are best acquainted with each other. Poverty is the only thing, which is certain, and acute as death and the poor to resist the pressure of reality, have constantly murmured for ages with their silent signs and secret languages, which the others can never learn.*²⁰ (Tekin 1997: 7)

[Yoksulların ruhları en iyi birbirleriyle tanışır ve anlaşırlar! Yoksulluk ölüm kadar kesin ve keskin olan tek şeydir ve yoksullar, bu gerçeğin baskısına direnebilmek için, yoksul olmayanların asla öğrenemeyeceği sessiz işaretleri ve gizli dilleriyle yüzyıllardan beri durmamacasına mırıldanırlar]

Latife Tekin's fourth novel *Buzdan Kılıçlar*, which tells the story of the poor out on a hunt for money, appeared in 1989. Latife Tekin, in a conversation with Erdir Zat, expresses that she wrote *Buzdan Kılıçlar* to reveal a feeling which accumulated in herself but could not be put into words; that is to say the feeling of destitution [Bende biriken, ama bir türlü

²⁰ Translation mine.

dile getiremediğim bir duyguyu açığa çıkarmak, yazıya dökmek için yazdım. Yoksulluk duygusu bu.] (Tekin 1989b: 68). *Buzdan Kılıçlar* reflects the aspects of destitution of the people who live in the shanty-towns and Tekin, once more, depicts the story of squatter people in a significantly different way from *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*. As Nurdan Gürbilek points out destitute people of shanty-towns in *Buzdan Kılıçlar* do not live in a community which is closed to the world outside, but one which is open to what is strange and distant to them (Gürbilek 1999:49). It can be stated that *Buzdan Kılıçlar* is the tale of the poor who are in search of money. The language used in the novel is also influenced by the divergent language of that unfamiliar and distant world. Characters in the novel, particularly Halilhan Sunteriler and Gogi, seem ambitious to get involved in that unfamiliar world and travel in the paths of its language. That unfamiliar language of the external world becomes something peculiar in the words of the characters. As Gürbilek puts it, the language Tekin uses in *Buzdan Kılıçlar* is “magical and at the same time funny, odd, imitative, heroic, ornamented and slang. This language is a nebulous rhetoric which doesn’t have an objective equivalent in the world” (Gürbilek 1999: 50) [Büyülü ama aynı zamanda komik, rüküş; taklit, hamaset, süs, argo karışımı bir dil; bu dünyada nesnel karşılığı olmayan tuhaf, bulutsu bir belagat].

Beginning with the publication of her first novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* Latife Tekin was described as a writer of poverty. As a matter of fact this description by literary critics does not seem inappropriate because Tekin herself often mentioned that she tried to tell the tales of destitute people. However she had never represented herself as a writer of destitution, until the publication of *Buzdan Kılıçlar*. After the novel was published, she clearly stated that the novel is about destitution and that she holds an unusual position as an insider who experienced destitution at first hand. In the interview with Erdir Zat, Tekin states her position as a writer in the Turkish literary scene:

My position seems to be strange. I am from the poor who learnt how to write; I do not feel like a writer. This is why I have no affiliation with the Writer's Association (Yazarlar Sendikası). I find various names to my position. For instance I say, "I am not a writer but a translator". The thought of translating the "silent" world of destitute people into the language of the world means much more to me. (Tekin 1989b: 69)

[Konumum oldukça garip. Yazıyı öğrenmiş bir yoksulum ben, kendimi bir yazar olarak hissetmiyorum. Belki bu yüzden Yazarlar Sendikası'na üye olmuyorum. Çeşitli adlar yakıştırmalar buluyorum kendime. Örneğin 'Ben yazar değil çevirmenim' ya da bir 'aktarmacıyım' diyorum. Yoksulların 'dilsiz' dünyasını bu dünyanın diline çevirdiğimi ya da aktardığımı düşünmek daha anlamlı benim için]

After that statement, in my view, the label of destitution stuck to Tekin even though the themes changed in her following novels. Undoubtedly, Tekin is not the only one who writes about destitution which is not an unusual literary subject. Nevertheless, literary professionals for some

reason associate Tekin's writing very strictly with poverty and Tekin has been labeled as the writer of destitute people. Furthermore she has been considered a representative of destitute people. It would be apt to specify that there exists some reasons behind this categorization. First of all, Tekin's own explanations led to this kind of image. Literary professionals who are in search of a description, hastily, labeled Tekin as a writer of destitute people. Secondly, Tekin's difference and originality in her narrative technique, the point of view she employs as an insider and especially her familiarity with the theme she depicts and her first hand experiences in relation to destitution led her to be described as the literary representative of destitute people in literature. Literary professionals tend to consistently emphasize her past days and in my own experience in most of the conferences, seminars and panels which Tekin attends, poverty and her experiences of it comes to the forefront even if the subject in hand is not destitution. In the light of these statements, it can be claimed that the reception of Tekin's literary works, basically revolves around the theme of destitution and deprivation. In addition, it would not be out of place to state that Tekin's authorial image, in the source culture, has been very closely associated with poverty and deprivation.

2.2.5 *Aşk İşaretleri* (Signs of Love)

The following novel of Latife Tekin was *Aşk İşaretleri* and was published in 1995, after a six year break. Tekin, in *Aşk İşaretleri* portrays the story of four young people, one girl and three boys, who undergo trials and tribulations in their lives. In Tekin's words "[...] they are children in their adolescence having nothing but their names and living in a secluded part of the world" (Tekin 1995b: 4) [Bunlar ergenlik çağında, adlarından başka birşeyleri olmayan, dünyanın kuytusunda, kayıp bir yerde yaşayan çocuklar]. These four young characters in the novel meet a boy called Nezir, who is older than them and whose vision and words dazzle them. Since Nezir has the ability to use language skillfully and can express himself cleverly and his younger companions are enchanted by his ability and influenced by his dominant character. These characters spend their lives in poverty similar to the other characters of Tekin in her previous novels, yet theirs is not a merely material poverty. They lack in language and stand wordless. Therefore, they are caught by the passion and magic of Nezir's words as if they are in love. It can be argued that it is not love but mostly a passion that embraces them. Nurdan Gürbilek states that "It is a story of young people taking shelter in somebody's language in youth, desperation, naiveté and weakness" (Gürbilek 1999: 51-52) [Gençliği, çaresizliği, saflığı, aczi içinde bir başkasının diline sığınmanın,

cümlelerine kapılmanın...hikayesi]. Tekin herself says that “*Aşk İşaretleri*, depicts how innocent youths can be enchanted by language, signs and gestures” (Tekin in Özer 2005: 158) [*Aşk İşaretleri*, dil ve aynı zamanda işaretler, jestlerle masum gençlerin nasıl büyülenebileceğini anlatır].

As a writer Tekin skillfully plays with words and it can be said that hers is a journey in language. Each of Tekin’s novels has a distinct style in terms of language, indicating that she plays and sometimes struggles with language. Her literary career can be considered a journey along the paths of language. She notes that she is in “a constant payback with the language” because language has a great power and it can sharply affect our lives and our souls (Tekin 1995c) [...dille sürekli bir hesaplaşma içinde oldum]. Language can, effortlessly build a world and at the same time ruin it (ibid.) [...dille dünya kurulup yıkılıyor]. It can be speculated that ‘language’ itself has become the most significant aspect, and at times, the theme of Tekin’s novel. Particularly, in *Aşk İşaretleri* the writer displays the power of words and their influences on people. can be the problem and the solution; besides, it can also be a medium between the problem and the solution, that is to say language can be used as an instrument to solve the problems which are also caused by language. That is why, in my view, Latife Tekin works on language and emphasizes it in various forms. In my view, the most significant aspect of

Aşk İşaretleri is the language used in the novel. Therefore, it is an important literary work, in which Tekin skillfully makes visible the power of the words.

2.2.6. *Gümüşlük Akademisi (The Academy)*

Gümüşlük Akademisi a short story about meaning, published in the form of a booklet by Nisan Yayınları in 1997. However, *Gümüşlük Akademisi* does not seem to be a well-known piece of Latife Tekin's career as a writer. Tekin, herself, states, "Although most of the audience liked it, *Gümüşlük Akademisi*, in general has not been listed in my complete booklist. I guess it has not been received as a book in its own right" (Tekin in Özer 2005: 176) [...sevilen bir kitap oldu *Gümüşlük Akademisi* ama kitaplarım arasında nedense onun adı geçmiyor bazı yerlerde. Pek kitap olarak algılanmadı]. In the story, Latife Tekin discusses in a highly metaphorical narrative whether the meaning is hidden in the words or in our bodies. Tekin, herself notes that the idea of writing *Gümüşlük Akademisi* first as an advertisement of *Gümüşlük Akademisi* (An Academy of Arts, Literature etc.) which was established in Bodrum (Tekin in Özer 2005: 173). Thus, there is a relation between the story and the academy itself. Tekin expresses that there exists a different feeling in *Gümüşlük Akademisi*; thus it seems to be separated from her other

writings (Tekin in Özer 2005: 176) [*Gümüşlük Akademisi* öyküsünün daha önce yazdıklarımdan farkı var, başka, yeni bir duygu hakim oldu ona]. The feeling in the story is lively and has positive connotations which make the reader feel more optimistic about life. It seems that the story aims to open a new perspective to the reader who is in search of the meaning of the words, of the behavior, or of life in general. Tekin notes that we can explore, not through words but through our shivers, thus we have to listen to our bodies in our search for meaning (Tekin in Özer 2005: 174) [Aslında sözcükler üzerinden değil, kendi ürpermelerimizi dinleyerek keşfedebiliriz hayatta bazı şeyleri. Anlamla ilgili anlamlı bir şey keşfedebilmek için kendi bedenimizde olup biteni izleyebilmemiz gerekiyor].

2.2.7. *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* (No Death in the Woods)

Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş, Latife Tekin's sixth novel came out in 2001. Latife Tekin, humorously, states in relation to the theme of the novel "When I was writing *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* I told the people who were curious about the novel, that it was the story of the insanity for two people..." (Tekin 2002: 27) [*Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş*'u yazdığım sıralarda, ne anlattığımı merak edip soranlara, iki kişilik bir delilik hikayesi yazıyorum diyordum]. The novel portrays a relationship between a man -a

painter- and a woman -the writer of unpublished short stories- who are in search of the meaning of their existence. Both of the characters in the novel have experienced a kind of loss; therefore, affected by the pain of that loss they chose to escape from the external world in which they feel stupefied. They go for walks in the woods together, and while moving forward in the silence of the woods they are purified from the noise of the external world. At the same time they make progress through their inner worlds. In relation to the theme of the novel Mahmut Temizyürek notes that “*Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* is a novel which is as deep as the murmur of the woods and as volatile as a wind. It is about existence but doesn’t offer_knowledge about life” (Temizyürek 2002: 42) [Ormanın uğultusu gibi koyu ama rüzgar kadar da uçucu, varoluş biçimlerine dair ama bir hayat bilgisi önermeyen...bir roman *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş*]. It was mentioned before that Tekin exploits a distinctive use of language and style in each of her novels. The transformation in her use of language started with *Aşk İşaretleri*. Furthermore, it can be argued that Tekin employs the plainest style of writing in her sixth novel *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş*. With respect to the change in her use of language Pelin Özer makes a significant statement:

The writer who opens her mind to a new language in each of her books, who finds herself new difficulties to overcome, constructs a brand new language from the simplest state of her soul in the process of writing, which continues with *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş*. This time, she ponders about the voice and balance of the nature, the

mysteries of the human soul and the things, which cannot be expressed with words and language. She creates a lightness of its density. (Özer 2002: 14)

[Her kitabında yeni bir dile açılan, kendine aşılacak yeni zorluklar yaratan yazar, [...]] *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* ile devam eden süreçte ruhunun en yalın halinden yepyeni bir dil kuruyor. Bu kez doğanın seslerine, dengesine, insan ruhunun gizlerine, söze, dile gelmeyene kafa yoruyor. Yoğunluğundan bir hafiflik yaratıyor]

Beginning with the publication of *Aşk İşaretleri*, Tekin also alters the theme of her novels and the way she looks at her characters. In her first novels her characters stand as “wordless” people, they cannot express themselves and Tekin as a writer does not have a tendency to analyze her characters’ inner worlds. Therefore, Tekin, in general, has been considered to be a writer who gives voice to destitute people and creates a language for them. However, in *Aşk İşaretleri* she changes her tack slightly, that is to say on the one hand she continues to emphasize destitution but on the other hand she touches on her characters’ inner worlds. Correspondingly, in *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* she creates a plain language and tries to get into her characters’ inner worlds through this language. It is also noteworthy that she seems to deviate from the theme of destitution. Destitute people only feature as acquaintances of the main characters.

2.2.8. *Unutma Bahçesi* (The Garden of Forgetting)

Latife Tekin's latest novel *Unutma Bahçesi* was published in 2004. The novel portrays the endeavors of a group of people to forget their previous life experiences. One of the characters in the novel Tebessüm says, "If we could forget till there is nothing left to forget we meet God, but we cannot forget that far" (Tekin 2004, Back cover) [Unutacağımız hiçbir şey kalmayana dek her şeyi unutabilsek tanrıyla karşılaşacağız ama oraya kadar unutmayı beceremiyoruz bir türlü]. Latife Tekin herself notes that "each book takes me somewhere and *Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* took me in the garden of forgetting so I wrote a novel about forgetting: *Unutma Bahçesi*" (Tekin 2004b: 14) [...her kitabın beni bıraktığı bir yer var...*Ormanda Ölüm Yokmuş* beni bir unutma sahiline, unutma bahçesine bıraktı, *Unutma Bahçesi*'ni yazdım]. Tekin calls the people on to forget in her final novel. Forgetting is not a thought in her novel but it rather becomes an action and Tekin thoroughly analyzes the action of forgetting. What separates *Unutma Bahçesi* from Tekin's early novels is the writer's choice of employing the features of a modern novel. It can be noted that there exists a protagonist with a number of other significant characters, a plot, a sequence of events, and there is no indefiniteness about time and space. Therefore, it can be stated that Tekin moved away from the

features of folk literature and moved towards the style of the modern novel. However, her lyrical language, which is reminiscent of fairy tales, can be seen in all of her narratives, as well as in *Unutma Bahçesi*.

2.3. Conclusion

This chapter is mainly about the reception of Latife Tekin's works, and her authorial image which is determined by the literary professionals in the source culture. One of the points that most of the critics agree on is the originality of Tekin's narrative. Tekin is considered a writer who breaks the conventions of the Turkish Novel. In relation to this viewpoint, Berna Moran notes that the literary works of Latife Tekin, along with some other contemporary writers like Bilge Karasu, Nazlı Eray, Orhan Pamuk and Pınar Kür, introduced a new form and content which had never been done before (<http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/htmlles/tekst-z/&tekst-z.htm>). Saliha Paker also affirms this point; "Nazlı Eray and Latife Tekin (1957-) are the two major writers in the 1980s who have effectively challenged mainstream fiction in their distinctive approach to the so-called 'realities' of Turkish society" (Paker 1991: 290). Therefore, it can be claimed that Tekin's novels have a distinguished narrative, and do not have similarities with previous Turkish literary works.

Reviews and critical articles reveal that after the appearance of Tekin's first novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, literary professionals conjectured as to whether or not Tekin's success was coincidental or not. However, in the following years, as Tekin's subsequent works came out, it has been a commonly held belief that her success was not coincidental. On the contrary, the writings of this young woman have given a new dimension to the Turkish Novel. However, at times Tekin's literary works were not defined as novels (Akatlı 1984: 46, Canpolat 2001: 61, Gümüş 1991: 110, Gündoğdu et al. 1985: 10, Özdemir 1985: 7). With respect to this what Sibel Erol comment appears to be significant:

Tekin's project can be described as a continual redefinition of the genre of the novel as she looks for, makes and dissolves new rules. However, Tekin's experiments can be read as such as a result of our expectations of what the Turkish novel is. In this sense, Latife Tekin's work, which is the negation of the rules of the novel as they are practiced in Turkey, can only be read as their culmination and development (Erol n.d.: 6).

As Sibel Erol points out, Tekin has broken the conventions of the Turkish Novel and her literary works ran at peak success. However, she does not neglect the contributions of the Turkish Novel to Tekin's works and argues that "Tekin's voice is completely original and revolutionary, but this originality can be read only in the light of the developments in the Turkish Novel" (Erol n.d.: 7).

Tekin was also criticized for not being a social realistic writer (Gündoğdu et. al. 1985: 10). Nevertheless, it is seen in her novels that

Tekin portrays reality in an original way, interweaving it with fantasy. Regarding this point Sibel Erol notes that “Latife Tekin exploits the assumptions of the realist Turkish novel about plot, time, language, character and identity to open up space for new meanings and realities” (Erol n.d.: 7). In other words, Tekin alters the characteristics of the realist Turkish Novel, however this does not make her writing less valid in terms of being a novel or being realistic. In my view, in her narrative Tekin questions and problematizes the social realities of Turkey in her own way.

Consequently, it can be noted that Tekin has had considerable influence on the development of the Turkish Novel and can be considered a significant woman writer in Turkish literature. As previously mentioned she has brought a new perspective to the Turkish Novel. Her originality in narrative and the distinctive techniques she employed made significant contributions to the development of the Turkish Novel after the 1980s. Therefore, it would be apt to state that Tekin has been regarded as “a revolutionary voice” (Erol n.d.: 7), particularly as a writer who gives voice to the destitute people. Mostly, Tekin’s works are received in relation to poverty, and her image as a writer is inevitably associated with destitution.

Chapter 3

Reception of Latife Tekin's Literary Works in the Target culture(s)

In this chapter I will present an account of the travels of Latife Tekin's literary works to the target culture(s). Target culture(s) refer to the Anglophone cultures in the context of the present thesis. I will basically focus on how her works have been received in the UK and the USA; however, other English-speaking countries such as Australia, New Zealand, The Republic of South Africa, Anglophone countries in Africa and Asia are included in the context of the Anglophone cultures. First of all, I will give brief information about the translations of Latife Tekin's novels which were published in various languages, and then I will focus on the reception of Tekin's works particularly in the Anglophone literary world. I will specifically dwell on the reactions to English translations of Tekin's works. The term 'reception' I use here does not include reader responses; I will solely focus on the critical approaches of "rewriters" (Lefevere 1992: 2).

3.1. Reception of Tekin's works in the target culture(s)

The travels of Tekin's literary works first started in 1988 with the Italian translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* entitled *Cara Spudorata Morte*²¹.

²¹ *Cara Spudorata Morte* was translated by Edda Dussi and Ugo Marazzi and published by Giunti Barbera. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 1.

A review in *The Turkish Times* states “*Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* is the first Turkish novel to have been translated into Italian since *Nur Baba* by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu which was written in the 1930s” (Ersanlı 1989: 11). Regarding this review, it can be considered that *Cara Spudorata Morte* represented a turning point for translated Turkish literature in Italy, since it had been the first novel translated from Turkish after a long period of time.

After the Italian translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, the Dutch translation of *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* entitled *Bloemheutel*²² came out in 1991. Johan Soenen, in an article entitled “The Image of Turkish Literature in Flanders” states that the general preference for translated Turkish novels, is those which deal with political and social problems encountered particularly after the military coups of 1971 and 1980 (Soenen 2000: 41). He notes that in contemporary Turkish literature there exists a distinct preference for novels by writers who “under the military regime saw the introduction of a considerable number of economic and political reforms. This might explain the success of writers such as Latife Tekin and Orhan Pamuk. Latife Tekin’s novel *Bloemheutel* poignantly describes the typical and social tension of urban life i.e. life in the big city” (Soenen 2000: 43). It can be inferred from Soenen’s statements that the reason why Latife Tekin was chosen for translation is because her theme

²² *Bloemheutel* was translated by Thijs Rault and published by De Geus.

in *Berci Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* is in accordance with the mainstream preference for translated Turkish literature in Flanders.

In 1993, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* was translated into English with the title *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*²³ and published both in United Kingdom and United States and in the same year the German translation of the novel appeared with the title of *Der Honigberg*²⁴. The Persian translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was published in 1994 and entitled *Marg-i Aziz-i Biar*²⁵. *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* was translated into Italian as *Fiabe dalle Colline dei Rifiuti*²⁶ in 1995, seven years after the publication of *Cara Spudorata Morte*. In the same year, the French literary world got acquainted with Tekin's *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* in its French translation entitled *Contes De La Montagne D'ordures*²⁷, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* entitled *Chère Défunte*²⁸ in 1997 and *Buzdan Kılıçlar* entitled *Épées de Glace*²⁹ in 1999.

²³ Henceforth I will use the English title *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills* when referring to the novel.

²⁴ *Der Honigberg* was translated by Harald Schüller and published by Unionsverlag. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 2.

²⁵ *Marg-i Aziz-i Biar* was translated by Celal Hüsrevşahi and Rıza Seyid Hüseyini and published by Nigah.

²⁶ *Fiabe dalle Colline dei Rifiuti* was translated by Ayşe Saraçgil and published by Giunti Barbera. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 3.

²⁷ *Contes De La Montagne D'ordures* was translated by Ali Semizoğlu and published by Stock. Front cover pages can be seen in appendix 4.

²⁸ *Chère Défunte* was translated by Alfred Depeyrat and published by Stock. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 5.

²⁹ *Épées de Glace* was translated by Alfred Depeyrat and published by Stock. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 6.

Subsequently in 2000, the Spanish translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* appeared with its thought provoking title *El Panuelo Turco*³⁰. In 2001, Greek translation of *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* was published with the title *Τα παραμύθια των σκουπιδιών της μπερτζή Κριστίν*³¹ (*Ta Paramathia ton Skuopidia tis Berci Kristin*). The Spanish translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, among the other translations of Tekin's novel, seems to be striking. Laurent Mignon touches upon its title and notes that the title of the Spanish translation of the novel *El Panuelo Turco* – which can be translated into English as The Turkish Handkerchief – represents the orientalist perspective of the Spanish publishing house Martinez Roca on Turks and Turkish literature (<http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~kanat/k1306.html>). In relation to this viewpoint, Müge Gürsoy Sökmen underlines the inappropriateness of the picture on the cover page, “If you look at the cover, you will see ‘The picture of a young north-African’ by Jean Portael. As you know Jean Portael (1818-1895) was an important representative of the traveling orientalist painters who traveled around North Africa. His painting is said to evoke ‘an image of the Orient, as dreamed up by the souls of the romantics’ (Gürsoy-Sökmen 2002: 6). Accordingly, Laurent Mignon and Müge Gürsoy Sökmen both indicate that the Spanish translation – at least the cover page and the title – represents an

³⁰ *El Panuelo Turco* was translated by Josè Ramòn Monreal and published by Martinez Roca. Front cover page can be seen in appendix 7.

³¹ *Τα παραμύθια των σκουπιδιών της μπερτζή Κριστίν* was translated by Ανθή Καρρά (Anthi Karra) and published by Εξάντας (Exandas). Front cover page can be seen in appendix 8.

orientalist approach to Turkish literature. Finally in 2004, the English translation of *Gümüşlük Akademisi* entitled *The Academy* was published in the journal *Translation Review* that was published by the Center for Translation Studies and the American Literary Translators Association. *The Academy* was translated by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne.

In relation to the reception of a translated text, what Lawrence Venuti states in the article “The Translator’s Invisibility: The Evidence of Reviews” communicates a general and prevalent viewpoint:

A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers, when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer’s personality or intention of the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but ‘the original’. (Venuti 1994: 16)

Venuti’s statement brings to mind two types of preferences in terms of translation: (1) it can be noted that rewriters mostly praise the translated literature which is purified from its culture-specific features and can be read as fluently as possible in the target language; or else (2) rewriters, particularly the representatives of patronage specify a stereotype for a particular culture and therefore, all the cultural transfer including translation occurs in that specific schema, as is in the case of the Spanish translation of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. Then, what might be the common tendency in Latife Tekin’s case? In the following sections, I will dwell on

the reception of Latife Tekin's two novels *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*³² and *Dear Shameless Death*³³.

Before proceeding with the reception of Tekin's novels, I would like to touch upon the significance of the translation processes of the novels. The importance of the translator as an agent of cultural interaction was pointed out in the first chapter. It would be apt to state that the translators of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* have also played considerable parts in the translation, publication and reception processes. In an interview³⁴, Saliha Paker explains how she started the translation process of *Berji Kristin*:

A friend of mine sent me a copy of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* when they were first published in Turkey. At the time I was living in London. I remember my students at SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies, where I was teaching Turkish language and literature as a part time lecturer) asking me such questions as why Yaşar Kemal was the only Turkish novelist available in English, if there were no writers of urban fiction to be translated, etc. It was encouraging, of course, to hear that they wanted to read more from Turkish authors. This was between 1983 - 1985... It was *Berji Kristin Çöp Masalları* that really captivated me. I fell in love with the first chapter, the founding of Çiçektepe, which read like an epic and I felt it was crucial to get the style and the tone right. So I asked my friend Ruth Christie if she would work with me. Ruth was a lecturer in English literature at the time. She'd also read Turkish at SOAS. Ruth, as you know, is an amazingly gifted literary translator. (Paker 2005: 1)

³² Henceforth I will use the English title *Berji Kristin: Tales from Garbage Hills* when referring to the novel.

³³ Henceforth I will use the English title *Dear Shameless Death* when referring to the novel.

³⁴ Full interview can be seen in appendix 12.

Paker's words shed light on the importance of the translator as an initiator of the translation process. Her statements also reveal the endeavors of a translator who aims to introduce the fiction of her native country to the target culture(s).

It might be considered as self-evident that the translators play a significant role not only in the translation processes but also in the publication processes. It is impossible to ignore the efforts of the translators in the publication processes, especially in the translations from Turkish to other languages. With regard to this point Paker states:

I had to [start the publication process] because we'd started the translation without being commissioned by any publisher. But I had always felt convinced that we would find one, once we'd made some progress with the translation. The first publisher we approached was Carcanet Press in Manchester, who were also publishing Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*. Mike Freeman who was the fiction editor there was really excited about Latife's writing. They published an excerpt from our translation in their magazine, *PN Review*, which was met with wide interest by their distinguished readers, one of whom was Christopher Middleton, poet and translator of German and some Turkish poetry. I still keep the letter Mike Freeman sent telling me all about that. Carcanet were really interested. In fact Mike Freeman did the publishers' editing of the book. But unfortunately we couldn't agree with Michael Schmidt on the translators' fee. What he proposed was, we thought then, unacceptably low. So we decided to look for another Publisher. We tried several, such as Granta, Serpent's Tail, Women's Press. They all liked the book but said they couldn't "risk" taking it on. They weren't sure if it would sell well. In the meantime, Müge Gürsoy Sökmen had helped us to approach Marion Boyars whose husband Arthur Boyars was what you might call a "friend of Turkey". Marion had true literary acumen. She had no difficulty in

spotting works of literary merit and had published several authors who later won the Nobel Prize. But she was also a sharp negotiator. After lengthy conversations which resulted in no fee at all for the translators, she accepted publishing the book. She also asked me to write an introduction to explain how “real” *Berji Kristin Çöp Masalları* was, i.e. its Turkish social and literary context (Paker 2005: 2).

Paker’s statements indicate the difficulties in the publication process. It might be argued that to have a translation of a Turkish novel published in the target culture(s) is especially difficult. In an interview with Mehmet Yaşın³⁵, Ruth Christie also mentions the reasons why the publishing houses rejected the opportunity to publish Turkish literature. Christie notes that the publishing houses have commercial worries in the first place (Christie 1993: 8). She states that *Berji Kristin* seemed ‘foreign’ to the target culture(s)’ audience and emphasized that without the endeavors of the co-translator Saliha Paker and the publisher’s trust in her literary and translational expertise the novel might have not been published in the target culture(s) (ibid.) [Eğer çeviriyi birlikte yaptığımız Saliha Paker’in girişimleri olmasaydı ve yayınevinin yöneticisi Saliha Paker’in edebiyat ve çeviri yeteneğine güven duymasaydı bu kitap hiç basılmayabilirdi].

Müge Gürsoy Sökmen, the owner and editor of Metis Publishing, in her article “Being a Woman Publisher in ‘Islamist Country’” also dwells on

³⁵ In his introductory note Mehmet Yaşın informs the reader that Ruth Christie is the translator of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. He, for some reason, ignores Saliha Paker and does not mention her name as the co-translator of the novel. The situation is striking because in the interview, Paker’s endeavors – as co-translator – to have *Berji Kristin*, is pointed out by Ruth Christie.

the problems that she encountered when promoting the works of the authors which were published by Metis. She points out that Western publishers expect “good literary documentaries of family violence, wife-beating, harassment from the violent Orient”, or something with local color except from plays and poetry. She notes that there existed, basically, two barriers in front of her as a publisher who was promoting her writers; the first one is prejudice, and the other one is the “quota”: “It is no coincidence that after receiving very good reviews from publishers, readers and hopeful notes from their editors, I received from one big publishing house in Germany and another in France the same words of rejection for Latife Tekin: ‘We have already published one/two Turkish authors this year,’ naming me authors whose works have no resemblance whatsoever to those of Tekin” (http://www.bianet.org/2002/12/02eng/news_14841.html). All of these aforementioned statements reveal that the publication of a Turkish literary work in the target culture(s) is challenging and has a variety of difficulties to overcome. However, it would be apt to restate the finding that the translators can also remain as a positive force behind the publication processes.

3.1.1. *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*

Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills came out in English in 1993. The first edition of the novel was a hardback. The first paperback edition

was published in 1996 and the second paperback edition in 2004. The novel was translated by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker and published by Marion Boyars. As a matter of fact, the travel of *Berji Kristin* in the Anglophone world first started in 1989, before the novel was published in 1993. An excerpt of three pages entitled “Rubbish Road” which was also translated by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker appeared in a British literary magazine called *P.N.Review*. This first appearance signaled the forthcoming publication of the novel. If we look at the two translations – the novel *Berji Kristin Tales from the Garbage Hills* and the excerpt “Rubbish Road” – we can see some differences between the two translations and these differences indicate the significance of the translation process. After the first appearance of the excerpt from *Berji Kristin*, in 1991 the first available information about Latife Tekin and her narrative was presented by Saliha Paker in her article “Unmuffled voices in the shade and beyond: women’s writing in Turkish”. Paker stated that Latife Tekin is one of the significant writers “who have effectively challenged mainstream fiction in the 1980s, in [her] distinctive approach to the so-called ‘realities’ of Turkish society” (Paker 1991: 290). Paker expressed that “Each of her four books...is a challenge in itself: none of them fits in with the dominant mode of realism, nor are they ‘novels’ in the traditional form. Tekin’s fabulative strategy and her ‘magical’ use of metaphor are based on the way her characters, and the community of

which they are part, perceive the world” (ibid.). Regarding Paker’s information about Latife Tekin, it is accurate to say that an image of Tekin was presented to the target culture(s) and the reception process started before Tekin’s *Berji Kristin* was published.

There exist a number of elements which are effective in the reception of a literary work: (1) the translators’ own reception of the piece and its linguistic, social, ideological and cultural reflections on the translated text; (2) the reception of the publishing house and its policy of publication; and (3) the reception of the reviewers and critics. The translators’ own reception of a literary work seems to be significant due to the fact that they are the agents of transmission. Therefore, how a translator produces a translation and presents it to a particular target culture(s) is a crucial component of the reception process. In addition to that, how the publishing house receives the work, what kind of a publication policy it employs, and how it presents the work to the literary environment are other vital components of the reception process. Furthermore, the reception of the rewriters, their critical approach to a translated literary text can be considered one of the significant components of the reception process. Before proceeding with how *Berji Kristin* was received in the target culture(s) and how the rewriters criticized the translation itself, I’d like to analyze the approach of the

publishing house and deal with how the publishing house presented *Berji Kristin* to the Anglophone literary scene.

When the first hardback edition came out in 1993, a note on the back cover introduced the novel as follows:

The cast-offs of modern urban life are driven out onto the edges of the city and left to make a life there as best they can. They find themselves in a world of refuse and useless junk – a place that denies any sustainable form of dignified life. Some of the lucky ones find work in a factory, but are ruthlessly exploited. All attempts at reasserting their humanity seem doomed to failure; yet somehow they survive. In this dark fairy tale, Latife Tekin has written a grim parable of survival and dignity. (Tekin 1993)

The back cover note, written most probably by the editor, can be considered the first introductory piece of the novel. The back cover note represents how the publishing house prefers to present the novel to the target audience. It seems that with this back cover note, the publishing house does not state any value judgments about the writer and the note appears to be merely a synopsis of the theme and it seeks to be as objective as possible in terms of the novel's literary value. Another indicator which shows how the publishing house presents the novel is the publisher's booklet consisting of new books and publishing lists³⁶. In a flyer, Marion Boyars announced the publication of *Voices* and *Berji Kristin*

³⁶ The novel was presented on the same page in "New books and complete backlist September 1991 – September 1992" booklet of Marion Boyars Publishers, with three novels: *All Fires the Fire*, *Cronoios and Famas* and *62: A Model Kit* by an Argentinean writer Julio Cortazar and *The Marriage Scenarios* by Ingmar Bergman. In "New books and complete backlist September 1992 – September 1993" booklet, the novel appears on the same page with three other novels *Voices* by an Egyptian writer Soleiman Fayyad, *The Pygmies and The Pyramid* by an American writer Edgar White and *Siblings and the Children's Story* by a German writer Klaus Mann.

together and noted that “Marion Boyars Publishers are bringing in the New Year by beginning 1993 with a new direction in publishing: Turkish novelist Latife Tekin and Egyptian writer Soleiman Fayyad both present the reader with visions of different worlds...Marion Boyars Publishers have for many years made an effort to publish literature in translation from some of the best talents writing today in French, German, Italian, Danish, Russian and Spanish. Now with *Voices* and *Berji Kristin*, our list is being expanded even further” (Marion Boyars Publishers). The point that I want to illustrate from this specific data is about the politics of the publishing house in relation to the publication of *Berji Kristin*. It seems that the publishing house, which can be considered one of the most influential control mechanisms in the literary system, did not have a tendency to emphasize the dichotomy between East and West. This is evident because the publishing house did not categorize the writers according to their home countries.

The back cover page note mentioned above can be considered a paratextual material and paratextual materials have considerable influence on the reception of a literary work. It was mentioned that the back cover page note did not express any value judgments about the novel. However, there exist other paratextual materials such as pieces from some reviews which indicate a kind of judgment in relation to the

literary value of the novel. The back cover page³⁷ of the first hardback and paperback editions list four excerpts from the reviews. An excerpt from *Kirkus Reviews* notes that “Tekin seamlessly marries the timelessness of marginal lives with their contemporary manifestation. An accomplished novel”. The second excerpt is from *The Times Literary Supplement* and defines the novel as “a provocative and enjoyable work”. The third excerpt from *The Independent on Sunday* describes the novel as “a nihilistic wit reminiscent of Samuel Beckett”. And the fourth one was taken from *The Women’s Review of Books* and states that the novel is “a small masterpiece of beauty”. On the front cover of the novel an excerpt, taken from the preface by John Berger, welcomes the reader, “A shanty-town becomes the center of the world, holding the stage and addressing the sky”. The second paperback edition of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*³⁸ seems to be striking in terms of paratextual materials. First of all, the cover design was changed and the title of the novel was misprinted as ***Berji Kristen: Tales from the Garbage Hills***. Although the error in the title was not deliberate, a misprint appearing on the front cover page of the third edition of a novel may cause the audience to think that the novel was printed without due diligence.

A literary professional who had a considerable influence on the reception of Tekin’s *Berji Kristin* is John Berger who had written a

³⁷ Front and back cover pages of the first paperback edition of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* can be seen in appendix 9.

³⁸ Front and back cover pages of the second paperback edition can be seen in appendix 10.

flattering preface to the novel. Before the preface he wrote, I want to mention an article in which John Berger expresses how he first met Latife Tekin. John Berger in his article “To Take Paper, To Draw” published in *Harper’s Magazine* states that in one of his visits to Istanbul, he asked his friends to arrange a meeting with Latife Tekin and he explains why he wanted to meet her in these words, “I had read a few translated extracts from two novels she had written about life in the shantytowns on the edge of the city. And the little I had read deeply impressed me with its imagination and authenticity” (Berger 1987: 57). Berger states, “We were both storytellers without a word in common. All we had were our observations, our habits of narrative, our Aesopian sadness” (ibid.). Berger expresses that although Latife Tekin and he did not have a common language in which to communicate, they managed to understand each other without any help of an interpreter only by drawing on a piece of paper. He notes that they even started to tell stories to one another by drawing:

Then she told me a story about the municipal bulldozers destroying the houses built in the night on the city’s edge. I told her about an old woman who lived in a van. The more we drew, the quicker we understood. In the end we were laughing at our speed – even when the stories were monstrous or sad. (Berger 1987: 58)

The preface to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (Berger 1993), which was written by John Berger, seems to be a significant piece of rewriting which drew the literary professionals’ attention to the novel.

John Berger's preface which is both flattering and full of praise is a valuable promotion for Latife Tekin whose novels had just been published in English for the first time. Therefore, it can be expressed that Latife Tekin appeared in the Anglophone literary world with the support of John Berger who is a notable literary professional in the target culture(s).

Berger starts his preface with these words:

I have never read another book like this one. And perhaps you haven't either. True originality is unusually difficult to define because it gives the impression of existing for the first time and this – fortunately – precludes generalizations. (Berger 1993: 5)

Berger indirectly touches upon Latife Tekin's characteristic features dealing with their first meeting in Istanbul. It can be inferred from Berger's words that he conceives of Tekin as a mature, warm and candid person whose "laughter is very Mediterranean" (Berger 1993: 6). Berger's preface revolves around the authenticity and literary value of *Berji Kristin* and he wrote:

The originality of Tekin's mature book is the direct consequence of its story. Before her no shanty-town had entered literature – had entered written narrative – as an entity in itself...She has written down what before had never been written down...She showed that it was possible, possible for any reader anywhere in the world, to at last imagine the center of the world as a shanty-town! (Berger 1993: 6-7)

He also emphasizes the originality of Tekin's language and highlights that it's Tekin's language which turns a shanty-town out a center of in its own (Berger 1993: 7). Tekin's narrative and language is

original “because she is familiar with the lives lived on the garbage hills. She knows deeply how nick-names, stories, rumours, jingles, gossip, jokes, repartees constitute a kind of home, even the most solid home, when everything else is temporary, makeshift, illegal, shifting and without single guarantee” (ibid.). Berger expresses that Tekin finds the language of “rumour” and states; although “Tekin’s rumour is feminine and sober” some pages can be compared to “the male voice of drunken rumour [of Joyce]” (Berger 1993: 8). With respect to Berger’s statements, it may be noted that he speaks highly of Latife Tekin and announces to the target culture(s) that *Berji Kristin* is an authentic novel which is worthy to be read in all its aspects. Berger’s preface can be conceived of as one of the main sources that the target culture(s) builds upon in its reception of Tekin’s literary works. Another source of reception is, undoubtedly, the introduction to *Berji Kristin* by Saliha Paker.

Saliha Paker, in her introduction to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, gives an introduction to the writer which was written by Tekin herself and appeared on the back cover of the first edition of her *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. The information presented by Saliha Paker was the first that gave an insight into [Latife Tekin’s] background and way of writing. In the following pages we will see that most of the literary professionals in the target culture(s) benefit from Paker’s introduction of Tekin when writing their reviews and criticisms. After this introductory

note about Tekin, Paker gives short and to the point summary of the history of the Turkish novel. Paker expresses how Latife Tekin, both with her *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, expands the boundaries of social realism which became the major narrative during the 1950s in Turkish fiction. She specifies that from the 1960s the scope of the novel and the short story started to change with the women writers' endeavor of searching for new directions and styles which challenge the common ground of Turkish fiction. Then she touches upon the position of Latife Tekin in Turkish fiction:

Latife Tekin stood as a challenge to the mainstream fiction of the 1980s by rejecting 'realism' in favour of a highly metaphorical perception of reality in which fantasy is an essential element. In conjunction with fresh narrative forms, Tekin developed a figurative style, which is vigorous and innovative. She has often expressed the desire to forge 'a language of the deprived', one that gives expression not only to their way of life but also to their outlook on life, perception of reality, sense of humor and dreams. In this respect *Berji Kristin*, her second book (1984), can be considered a breakthrough in modern Turkish fiction. (Paker 1993: 12)

In her introduction, Paker deals with the originality of the subject in Tekin's *Berji Kristin* and notes that "The squatter settlement, which had so far existed in Turkish fiction as the periphery whose inhabitants were taken into account in terms of the social class they represented, became in *Berji Kristin* a world of its own" (Paker 1993: 13). Paker touches upon the language as another significant feature of Tekin's narrative and specifies that "The rich variations in Latife Tekin's language, which give

expression to a powerfully creative inner voice, will inevitably be recognized as having sparked off the imagination of a whole new generation of writers, regardless of gender” (Paker 1993: 14).

It can be stated that Paker’s introduction gives intensive information about Latife Tekin’s background, narrative and position in Turkish fiction. Therefore, it appears to be a significant source of reception for the target culture(s). In relation to the significance of both John Berger’s preface and Saliha Paker’s introduction, Jale Parla in her review “Bir Çeviri, İki Önsöz” expresses that “*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* which aimed to create the language of destitution has been published with great support with John Berger’s lyrical and charming preface and Saliha Paker’s perfect introduction” (Parla 1993: 9) [John Berger’in şiirsel ve çarpıcı önsözüne, Saliha Paker’in yetkin önsözü de eklenince, yoksulluğun dilini yaratma amacındaki *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* dünyaya hiç de öksüz çıkmamış oluyor].

Before proceeding with how *Berji Kristin* has been received in the Anglophone world, I would like to touch upon the translation itself. With regard to what Lawrence Venuti points out, it can be stated that there exists a tendency to judge a translation as acceptable when its culture-specific, linguistic, and stylistic features are omitted and it reads as fluently as possible. In the following pages I would like to try to make a brief descriptive analysis on *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*

with a particular emphasis on the translation of culture-specific features of the novel and the significant aspects of Tekin's narrative. I will try to find out what kind of translation strategies were employed during the process, what kind of a final translation was produced, and discuss how the translation itself was criticized and received by the literary professionals.

Before making the descriptive analysis, I would like to touch upon the position of translation criticism in the field of translation studies. What I will do in this study is not a comprehensive and detailed criticism of the translation, yet I will intentionally focus on the translation of culture-specific features and give relevant examples to support my argument. When the present position of translation criticism is overviewed, it seems that it cannot benefit enough from the method of descriptive analysis. Translation criticism can still be considered an area in which critics freely indicate their likes or dislikes or subjective views without any analysis and description. Except for those rare occasions when the criticism that a translated text receives is based on a descriptive analysis, there exists a tendency to make error identification and label the translation bad and the translator incompetent. It may be argued that critics do not ask relevant questions and search for the possible explanations. "Why might the text have been translated in this way?" "What could be the reasons?" Translation criticism, indeed, should be dealt with its all aspects, since it consists of not only the analysis of the text, but of the cultural, ideological,

anthropological, sociological aspects. Raymond van den Broeck stresses the importance of objective criticism and its requirements: "To say that objective translation criticism should, at least implicitly, start from a descriptive basis is to admit that the translation critics' business is a scholarly occupation, requiring literary skill as well as interlinguistic and intercultural competence. It is a matter of knowledge more than of taste, of understanding more than of evaluating" (van den Broeck 1985:60). Carol Maier, in her article, also points out the importance of description in translation criticism, "...*translation criticism* should be grounded on thorough analysis and description" (Maier 1998:207). It is understood that translation criticism should be carried out seriously and the translators or the texts should not be judged immediately. That is to say, the critics should try to understand the translator's norms, purposes and constraints under which s/he works. Then, the text should be analyzed in detail and different aspects of the text such as textual, cultural, sociological, should be taken into consideration.

It may be argued that translation criticism plays a significant role in the reception of translated literature. A common tendency shows that book reviews or criticisms published in the newspapers, periodicals or literary journals do not address the translation in general but they merely focus on the style and the theme of the literary work. As Lawrence Venuti states, "On those rare occasions when reviewers address the translation

at all, their brief comments usually focus on its style, neglecting such other possible questions as its accuracy, its intended audience, its economic value in the current book market, its relation to literary trends in English, its place in the translator's career" (Venuti 1994: 16). Therefore, in spite of the fact that a literary work is received through its translation in a target culture(s) it can be claimed that reviewers or critics underestimate or do not take seriously the significance of translation criticism in the process of reception.

As mentioned in the first chapter, one of the most significant features of Latife Tekin's narrative is her use of language. She makes use of a highly metaphorical and at times lyrical language. It can be seen in her novels she skillfully alters the structure of language, she makes up some expressions which only make sense in a particular context. *Berji Kristin* appears to be a good example which demonstrates the games that Tekin plays with language. Her interweaving narrative that combines reality with fantasy takes the reader to the charmed and magical atmosphere of the squatter settlements.

Berji Kristin was criticized in the source culture for not being a novel in the true meaning of the classical-traditional novel (see Akatlı 1984, Canpolat 2001, Gümüş 1991, Özdemir 1985) because *Berji Kristin* has an unorthodox style which may be disturbing to the literary professionals who strictly hold to the conventions of the classical novel.

The structure of the novel is episodic; the novel does not follow a sequence of events. However it focuses on the stories of the people of the squatter settlement in a fragmented style. Another outstanding feature of Tekin's narrative is evidently her lyrical and poetical language. It is impossible not to notice the influence of poetry on her language. She successfully dissolves poetry in prose and then appears a rhymed, rhythmic and musical language. Moreover, this poetic language has absorbed folkloric elements which increase the culture-specific aspect of the novel. Here, I would like to analyze whether these significant features of Tekin's narrative have been preserved in translation or not. In this analysis I will give some excerpts as examples and refer to the source text *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* as ST1 and the target text *Berji Kristin Tales from the Garbage Hills* as TT1.

One of the distinctive features of the novel is movement. There exists a constant movement in the novel and one can notice the dominance of the verbs which particularly describe actions. This first excerpt displays the movement and the fantastic features used in the novel:

ST1

İnsanlar derin uykularından sıcak yüzlerine yağan, kirpiklerine konan karla uyandılar. İlk gökyüzünün kar olup konduların içine döküldüğü güzel bir rüya gördüklerini sandılar. Sonra bağıra çağıra karanlığı yırttılar. Kadın erkek, çağ çocuk herkes içlikleriyle dışarı döküldü. Fenerler yakıldı. Topluca çatı ve bebek aramaya çıkıldı. Kadınlar bebeklerini daha da uzağa sürüklemesin diye rüzgarın yolunu bağladılar. Bir ağıtla mendillerinin, yazmalarının ucuna düğüm attılar. (8)

TT1

The hut people woke snow falling on their lashes and faces still warm from deep sleep. They thought at first they were having a wonderful dream; the sky had turned to snow and filled their huts. Then their cries rent the night. Men and women, old and young, rushed out in their underwear; lanterns were lit; everyone turned out to search for roofs and babies. Keening and lamenting, the women tied magic knots in their handkerchiefs and headscarves to arrest the passage of the wind, praying it would carry the babies no further. (17)

ST1 evidently shows Tekin's interweaving narrative, with some culture-specific and folkloric features. And these culture specific and folkloric elements such as "arresting the passage of the wind" and "to tie magic knots in the handkerchiefs and headscarfs" can also be seen in TT1.

ST1

...Erkekler birer ikişer çatılarını çeke çeke getirip duvarların üstüne konurdular. Bir daha uçup gitmemeleri için de kalın iplerle bağlayıp uzunlamasına kırık tahtalar çaktılar. İpleri sedirlerin bacaklarına doladılar. Rüzgarın sert estiği günlerde bir yandan bu iplere, bir yandan tahtalara tutunup asıldılar. (9)

TT1

... The men dragged the roofs back, one or two at a time and, lifting them over the walls, tethered them with stout ropes and secured them with battens to prevent them flying off again. They wound the ropes round the legs of the long seats, which lined their walls, and whenever the wind blew hard they hung on tight and pulled on the ropes and battens. (18)

In the above excerpts ST1 shows how Tekin makes use of fantasy as if it is the reality itself and it is seen that TT1 reflects this interwoven structure of ST1.

Lyrical language seems to be an indispensable component of Tekin's narrative. Apart from the lyrical language, rhyming jingles are significant components of the narrative technique which Tekin employs in her novels, as well. The reader encounters the rhyming verses throughout

the novel and apart from these verse forms it is obvious that Tekin exploits the riches of a poetic language in her narrative. The following excerpts are some of the examples of the jingle forms used in the novel:

TT1

From the rooftop Crazy Dursun had a view
Of the gurgling kettle as it poured its brew.
(120)

ST1

Şır çaydanlık şır şır aktı
Deli Dursun damdan baktı. (93)

TT1

Ding ding, Dinga ding,
Out on strike the chemist went,
Keep it going, Dinga ding,
By the factory bloomed a snow-white tent.
Keep it going, Dinga Ding. (48)

ST1

Ting tınga tınga tıng
İlacın işçisi greve çıktı
Hele hele tınga tıng
Fabrika önüne ak çadır açtı
Hele hele tınga tıng. (34)

TT1

Hairless Ali, don't you cry!
We'll have a laugh at your expense
Without a bit of fun we'd die.
So up you go and have a turn,
Cold iron might improve your burn. (82)

ST1

Ağlama ulan kel Ali
Huylananı heyleneni
Ellemeyip n'edeceğiz
Gülmesek hep öleceğiz

Haydi de seni banta asalım
Yanığına soğuk demir basalım. (62)

TT1

Oh wind,
My eyes keep running, my poor knees shake,
All the time my shoulders ache,
My arms can't lift, my fingers chill,
One of us must leave this hill. (34)

ST1

Gözüm akar oldu dizlerim tutmaz
İki kulucumdan sancı hiç çıkmaz
Buydu parmaklarım kollarım kalkmaz
Ya sen git bu tepeden ya ben rüzgar.
(22)

It is noticeable that the above ST1 excerpts are prosodic units and there exist verbal parallelism, repetition and internal rhymes (*cf.* Leech 1969) in the lines and these elements constitute rhythm and music in the verses. As for the TT1 excerpts it can be noted that the translators' endeavor to reflect those features like verbal parallelism, internal rhyme and repetition have to be applauded. It can be stated that the form and content of the

verses in ST1 is preserved in TT1 with some manipulations. With regard to the manipulations made in translated poetry what James S. Holmes notes seems to be informative:

[...] no verse form in any one language can be entirely identical with a verse form in any other, however similar their nomenclatures and however cognate the languages. What in reality happens is that, much as one dancer may perform a pattern of steps closely resembling another's, yet always somehow different, because the two dancers are different, in the same way the translator taking the first approach will imitate the form of the original as best he can. (Holmes 1988: 26)

Regarding what Holmes states, it cannot be expected of a translator to produce a translated text which is identical with the original given that nothing can be identical with something else. Original texts and their translations cannot be expected to be identical; however, they complement each other to maintain the existence of the work. Here in our case, it can be noted that despite some differences in the number of lines TT1 seem to preserve the integrity of ST1.

Now let us look at some of the reviews and criticisms that the translation of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* received in the Anglophone literary world. Here, my aim is to discuss to what extent the reviews and criticisms deal with the translation itself, and in general, what they focus on. In relation to the position of translation criticism in the reviews and criticisms published in periodicals, journals or newspapers Lawrence Venuti states that reviewers or critics do not usually address

the translation itself, however “on those rare occasions when reviewers address the translation at all, their brief comments usually focus on its style” (Venuti 1994: 16).

There exist a number of book reviews and criticisms on *Berji Kristin* which were published in several newspaper, journals and literary magazines, and it can be noted that almost all the reviews and criticisms speak highly of Latife Tekin and *Berji Kristin*. Almost all the criticisms refer to the novel's literary value, its theme and style. Nevertheless, a few of them have contributions regarding the translation itself, either negative or positive. Before presenting a selection of excerpts that refers to the translation of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, I would like to touch upon what Jale Parla, a Turkish literary professional, comments on the translation of the novel. Parla praises the translation of the novel and states that she got excited that one of her favourite novels have been presented to the world with such a painstaking and successful translation (Parla 1993: 9). Parla's comment on the translation of the novel remains a significant critical review in the source culture and it may be argued that reactions which the translation of the novel received in the source culture may be influential on the target culture(s) reception of both the novel and its translation. Now, I would like to give a selection of reviews on the translation of *Berji Kristin* which appeared on various periodicals, literary journals and newspapers: the novel's often daunting English translation

by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker relates these circumstances in a series of loosely anecdotes to the feel of folk tales. (Kalfus 1993: 18)

The translators, Saliha Paker and Ruth Christie, are to be applauded for delivering the lusty Turkish text into English that is alive and kicking. (Gün 1993)

Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker have done an excellent job in keeping the author's flowery prose intact in the English translation, but Tekin's constant use of metaphors may lose readers who are not well grounded in Turkish culture. (<http://fetchbook.info/search0714530115/> tabreviews.html)

[Tekin's] *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, which gives voice to a community of shantytown-dwellers, has been translated into English. It had wide acclaim (like [Orhan] Pamuk, she has been well served by her translators). (*The Economist* 2001: 124)

The above reviews point out the success of the English translation of the novel, particularly noting that the translation reflects significant stylistic features of the novel such as the folkloric elements and the metaphorical language. A striking point stated by Şavkar Altınel is that the title of the English translation of the novel seems to be more accessible than the original title:

Sevgili Arsız Ölüm's immediate successor, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, whose cryptic title Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker have rendered into English more accessibly as *Berci Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, is probably her best...The result is a provocative and enjoyable work and, thanks to the painstaking translation, it reads no less well in English than in the original. (Altınel 1993: 21)

The review below praises the translation for sensitively transmitting the authentic theme of the novel which appears strange to the target culture(s):

The novel is also, needless to say, light years away from the jaded artifice of much contemporary European modernism, and it says much for this sensitive translation by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker (who also contributes an illuminating introduction) that it manages to convey the sense of the singular and memorable epic that is far removed from our own experience. (Kemp 1993)

The most detailed criticism about the translation comes from David Barchard, in his review on *Berji Kristin* in *Cornucopia*. Barchard applauds the success of the translation in rendering “the vigor and colorfulness of the original” but criticizes the translation of the Turkish private names which he calls “standard Turkish names and titles” (Barchard 1993: 20). Barchard criticizes that “Most of the original Turkish words are ironed out of the text and replaced with bland and inadequate English counterparts. Is Chief Mahmut, for instance, really “Mahmut Ağa” or “Mahmut Reis” or “Muhtar Mahmut”? There are no chiefs in English or American villages, so the word seems to be just a vague echo of American Indian usage” (ibid.). Barchard’s criticism and his argument seem to be relevant and have to be taken into consideration. However, if he had offered some possible solutions, his criticism and argument would have been more meaningful. Finally, I think what David Barchard stated,

with regards to the features of Tekin's narrative, indicates the success of the translation of the novel *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*:

What follows is not so much a connected narrative as a sort of verbal tapestry depicting the rapidly changing world of the people of the shanty community; it has a realism, which is at times shocking and painful, but at others bursts into an exuberant lyricism, with the prose giving way to snatches of verse. (Barchard 1993: 18)

Almost all of the above excerpts speak highly of the translation of the novel. Moreover all of them, except the last one, mention the names of the translators. What these excerpts have in common seems to be their appreciation of the translation for reflecting the style and the authentic language features of the source text.

Now let us look in more detail at the reviews and criticisms *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* received in the target culture(s). There exists a number of book reviews and critical articles on *Berji Kristin* which were published in several newspapers, journals and literary magazines. Here I would like to present a selection of excerpts comes from various British and American periodicals, both literary and for the mass audience, and from the Internet, to have a better understanding of the target reception of Tekin's, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*:

Tekin, one of the Turkey's best-selling authors, now débuts in English with a wry but poignant novel about the everyday lives of marginalized people cast off by urban society. (Ms Arlington 1993: 74)

Latife Tekin, one of the best-known Turkish novelists writing today, has produced a book which is somewhere between a hymn and a chronicle about life on the rubbish hills. (Barchard 1993: 18)

The novelist, [Latife Tekin], gives a fairy-tale, legendary quality to portrayal of the desperate life of a shanty-town thrown up out of junk on the outskirts of a city. (Buckley 1993)

The story of Latife Tekin's fascinating and most unusual novel is simply the building of this primitive society of Flower Hill. (Corbett <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>)

Latife Tekin, who has given the underprivileged masses a voice that can be heard by the world of literature, has presented the reading public another masterful fiction set in Istanbul's shantytowns, built overnight on the hills of garbage, particularly on one dump that is provisionally called Flower Hill. (Gün 1993)

It can be observed at first sight that almost all the reviewers speak highly of Latife Tekin and *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. A more detailed look reveals that reviews and critical articles particularly emphasize Tekin's language and narrative. With respect to Tekin's language, a review notes "Latife Tekin made a new language. Her first book, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, is written by angels (http://fetchbook.info/search_0714530115/tabreviews.html). In addition to this, David Kemp specifies "[Latife Tekin] has evolved her own story-telling language, rich in poetry and metaphor close to the oral tradition" for depicting "the rise and fall of the Flower Hill hut people" (Kemp 1993). Jennifer Joseph writes that "Tekin's narrating voice and language are

natural, perfectly suited for the stories she smoothly links together to form [*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*]” (Joseph 1993: 80). Moreover, Güneli Gün, in my view, also emphasizes the authenticity of Tekin’s language and observes the sources which Tekin’s narrative has benefited from:

Tekin's language survives unsevered not only from her own past in the Anatolian hinterland but also from the language of the Turks' Central Asian nomadic past, of tales, boasts, rumors, laments, riddles, ditties, gossip, exaggerations, jokes, adventures told around a campfire. Her language descends from the eighth-century Dede Korkut tales and the folktales surrounding the adventures of Keloglan, using the narrative device of testimony, rumors, interpretations of the elders (or additional storytellers, who, more often than not, are female), which provides a background much like the chorus in classical theater. (Gün 1993)

In addition to the emphasis on Tekin’s language, her narrative also attracts the rewriters’ attention. A review which appeared on the Internet points out “A nameless narrator recounts the abstract history of garbage hills from the point of view of a removed observer which leaves plenty of room for Tekin’s characters to take center stage. Although the inhabitants of the shantytown are simple folk, their stories are told in such a rich language that even the most mundane events in their lives stir emotion (http://fetchbook.info/search_0714530115/tab_reviews.html). It may be inferred from this review that Tekin makes her characters come to the center, or form their own center, with her language and narrative. Moreover, Martyn Bedford also appraises Tekin’s narrative:

Tekin's novel set in a Turkish shanty-town chronicles the squalid, violent and impoverished lives of the urban underclass. However, by eschewing the convention of building a story around one or more central characters, the author's "wide-angle" overview and metaphorical, surrealistic prose lessens the impact of her powerful theme. (Bedford 1993)

Bedford specifies the strength of the theme but notes that Tekin's figurative narrative reduces its effect. The subject of the novel revolves around a group of people who endeavor to gain a livelihood out of garbage on the slopes of Flower Hill. The novel depicts the difficulties those squatter community people encounter and in my view, this is the reason which makes the theme of the novel powerful. Bedford's review indicates that such a struggle for survival in *Berji Kristin's* Flower Hill community, which was built on the outskirts of a city, appears unfamiliar to the target culture(s). Therefore, it might be asserted that the unfamiliarity of the theme or the subject of the novel makes it original.

The originality of the novel's theme appears to be another point of emphasis in the target reception of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. Nurdan Gürbilek states that "[*Berji Kristin*] emerged with the claim to originality" (Gürbilek 2003: 622). It might be argued that the story of a shanty-town attracts the rewriters' attention as a brand new topic in fiction. As John Berger emphasized, Latife Tekin's narrative was the first which caused a shanty-town to enter literature and became a center of its

own (Berger 1993: 6). It can be observed that the following reviews indicate the inventiveness of the novel's theme:

Drawing on the testimony of squatters crammed into makeshift dwellings on the outskirts of Istanbul in the 1960s. Turkish author Tekin paints a fictional portrait of destitute people who literally create a community on a refuse heap. (*Publishers Weekly* 1992)

Latife Tekin tells the incredible story of a group of rural migrants who build a shantytown in a garbage dump and their experiences in trying to adapt to urban life. (http://fetchbook.info/search_0714530115/tab_reviews.html)

Based on actual events in the city of Istanbul, *Berji Kristin* gives life to people who own nothing...These tales of spirit and survival illuminate, through the power of rumor and the healing of laughter, both personal and corporate greed. (<http://www.turkuaz-guide.net/index.html?turkish-literature.htm>)

Tales from the Garbage Hills, a brutally realistic novel by a Turkish writer, Latife Tekin, about life in the shanty-towns, which in Turkey are called gecekondu ("built in a night"). (Kaplan 1994: 56).

[*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*] tells the story of Flower Hill, a pitiful squatter settlement cobbled together from the plastic detritus of consumerism on a garbage dump on the outskirts of an unnamed Turkish city, almost certainly Istanbul. (Kemp 1993)

In this dark fairy tale, Latife Tekin has written a grim parable of survival and dignity. (<http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio?inkey=65-0714530115-2>)

The above review excerpts highlight the destitution of the people living in *Berji Kristin's* Flower Hill and their struggle for life. In addition to those Maggie Traugott posits *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* is an

allegory for all societies with its extraordinary narrative which carries traces from Turkish oral tradition (Traugott 1993: 28). And finally Deirdre Levinson describes the novel as “the history of *gecekond* people that Latife Tekin chronicles in her marvelous tragicomic tales of a squatter community on a garbage dump called Flower Hill, spanning the years from its first night to its ultimate metamorphosis into a veritable urban complex complete with such distinctively urban features as a bank, a cinema, gambling dens, “knocking-shops”, “an endless race for possessions” and “a condition called the ‘family disaster’” (*Italics mine*, Levinson 1993: 30).

Another point which should be mentioned with regard to the target culture reception of *Berji Kristin* is its similarity to the narratives of a number of prominent authors of world literature. For instance, Maggie Traugott states that *Berji Kristin* is “with a nihilistic wit reminiscent of Samuel Beckett” (Traugott 1993: 28) and David Kemp states that *Berji Kristin* is “only comparable with *A Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez” (Kemp 1993). Mentioning Tekin’s name along with such notable authors and considering her narrative similar to these authors’ narrative seems to be very important for an author whose novel was published in English for the first time.

For the above mentioned reasons it can be said that a gathering of aforementioned excerpts taken from reviews and critical articles

indicate that *Berji Kristin* was appraised in the Anglophone literary world emphasizing the significance of the language, narrative and theme of the novel. Almost all the reviews touch upon the authenticity of the theme and the style of the novel.

3.1.2. *Dear Shameless Death*

Latife Tekin's literary début *Dear Shameless Death*, which was translated by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne, was published by Marion Boyars in 2001 as her second novel in English. The novel appeared seven years after the publication of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. As mentioned in the previous section *Berji Kristin* was received with great interest and in 1996 the second edition of the novel was published. It would be fair to claim that the particular reception of Latife Tekin and her narrative had already been formed at the time *Dear Shameless Death* was published.

As a matter of fact, the travel of *Dear Shameless Death* in the Anglophone literary scene did not start with the publication of the novel in 2001. An excerpt from *Dear Shameless Death* first appeared in 1986 in *Frank: An International Journal of Contemporary Writing & Art*. The title of the translated excerpt was *Dear Greedy Death*, which was translated by Şirin İskit, and David Applefield. The excerpt was published with a publisher's note which states that the particular excerpt was the first of

Latife Tekin's works to appear in English (*Frank* 1986: 65). After the first appearance of *Dear Shameless Death*, in 1988 a second excerpt was published in a selection of stories entitled *Twenty Stories by Turkish Women Writers* published by Indiana University Turkish Studies. The second excerpt entitled *How Dimit Started Writing Poems* was translated by Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy and was published with a translator's note:

This story is an excerpt from Latife Tekin's semi-autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death*, published in 1983, about the life of a family of rural origins who migrate to Istanbul and live in a shantytown. In order to survive in the big city, both economically and spiritually, all the members of this large family face enormous hardships and experience many adventures. In the midst of all this turmoil the youngest daughter of the family takes up writing to tell us about their lives in her special language of colorful rural idioms and images. (Mizanoğlu Reddy 1988: 106)

It can be claimed that Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy's introductory note to *Dear Shameless Death* and Latife Tekin, was the first to appear in the target culture. And *Dear Shameless Death* as a title was first used by Nilüfer Mizanoğlu Reddy (*ibid.*). It is possible to see a number of different translations offered for the title *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. Murat Belge, for instance, in an English summary of one of his articles, used "Dear Impertinent Death" in 1984 (Belge 1984b). In the same year, Joseph Kraft used "Dear Impudent Death", in his article "Letter from Turkey" (Kraft 1984). The translated excerpt, which was published in *Frank* in 1986, was entitled *Dear Greedy Death* (*Frank* 1986: 65). In 1993, Saliha Paker

offered “Dear Cheeky Death” in her introduction to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (Paker 1993: 9) and Şavkar Altinel used the same title in his review on *Berji Kristin*. Another translation of the title “The Dear Unabashed Death” by Jale Parla appeared in her article “Car Narratives” in 2003 (Parla 2003: 544). The last one seems striking because it appears after the novel was translated and published with the title *Dear Shameless Death* in 2001.

At this point, I would like to deal specifically with the translation of culture-specific features and the lyrical/poetical language that Tekin employs in *Dear Shameless Death*. I make a concise comparative analysis between *Dear Shameless Death* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, in my analysis; I refer to the target text *Dear Shameless Death* as TT2 and the source text *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* as ST2. I give some relevant examples which reflect the translation of culture-specific elements and the other significant features of Tekin’s narrative.

Language, in *Dear Shameless Death* as well, remains one of the most striking features of Tekin’s narrative. Tekin’s language is distinctly figurative and lyrical reflecting the influence of Turkish folk literature by frequent use of culture-specific elements. It can be observed that the translators, in TT2 aimed to reflect the effect which culture-specific elements made in ST2. The excerpts below display the transmission of culture-specific aspect of the novel:

ST2

Atiye okuyup üflerken, Dirmit bu defa gözlerini evlerin saçaklarındaki tahta oymalara verdi. Yemeden içmeden kesildi. Tahta oymaları bir kenara bıraktı, sokak lambalarının tepesindeki kocaman tabakların ne işe yaradığını düşünmeye başladı. Düşünmekten yoruldu. Oturduğu yerden sokağa kaneviçe gibi, yaprak yaprak işlenmiş küçük kara taşları saymaya başladı. Sonunda Atiye'nin cinini tepesine sıçrattı. Atiye, Dirmit'in saçlarına yapıştı, iki bacağından tuttuğu gibi kapının arkasındaki divana oturttu. Dirmit, bir ağıtla gözlerini tavana verdi. İçini çekip tavandaki oymalara baktı. Baka baka kendinden geçti. (67-68)

TT2

...While she recited and blew her prayers about, Dirmit forgot about eating and drinking and fixed her attention on the carved wooden eaves of their house. Then she started to wonder what use it was to have great big dishes on top of the streetlights. And when she finally grew tired of thinking about them, she started counting the little black cobblestones that dappled the street like embroidery on a canvas. At this, Atiye's djinns rushed up into her head in a fit of temper, and she grabbed Dirmit by her hair and legs and sat her down on the divan behind the door. Dirmit stared up at the ceiling, sobbing. She continued to gaze at the carvings there until she passed out. (82)

The expressions such as “okuyup üflemek”, “cinleri tepesine sıçramak” are examples of the culture-specific aspect of the novel. “Atiye okuyup üflerken...” was translated as “While she recited and blew her prayers about...” The translation reflects, particularly the effect of “okuyup üflemek” which denotes not only praying but also exorcizing the evil spirits. “Sonunda Atiye'nin cinini tepesine sıçrattı” was translated as “At this, Atiye's djinns rushed up into her head in a fit of temper...”. “Cinleri tepesine sıçramak” denotes to get very angry and the translators succeeded in not only making a literal translation of the expression but also transmitting the sense and effect.

“Oturduğu yerden sokağa kaneviçe gibi, yaprak yaprak işlenmiş küçük kara taşları saymaya başladı” This sentence demonstrates the

figurative language employed in *Dear Shameless Death*. It was translated as “...she started counting the little black cobblestones that dappled the street like embroidery on a canvas”. The translation reveals that the metaphorical language was preserved to a certain extent.

The narrative in *Dear Shameless Death* is not episodic as it is in *Berji Kristin*, and poetry is used to a lesser degree. In my view, the most remarkable example of the use of poetry in ST2 is as follows:

ST2

- Ah Dirmiş kız! Ah Dirmiş kız!
- Ne olursun tulumba, ağlama.
- Nasıl ağlamam, Dirmiş kız.
Bu bahar, açmadan toprağa düştü tomurcuklar.
Dediler, bir gözünü uyku tutmayanımız vardı.
Yüreği çarpa çarpa, bir seyre duranımız vardı.
Toplardı tek tek solup dökülen yapraklarımızı, saklardı koynunda.
Biz onun için dal sürüp yaprak verdik, Akçalı bahçelerinde.
Onun için tomurcuklanır, onun için kat kat açılırdık.
Gün doğmadan koşardı, su yollarından geçer, duvarlar aşardı.
Gelmedi bu bahar, gelmedi çok bekledik.
- Ah tulumba! Ah tulumba!
- Ne olursun, Dirmiş kız ağlama. (55)

TT2

- ‘Oh, Dirmiş girl, Dirmiş girl!’
- ‘Water pump, please don’t cry.’
- ‘How can I not, Dirmiş girl?’
‘Rosebuds dropped off before they could bloom this spring.
They said there once was a sleepless one,
There was one who kept watch over us,
Her heart beating fast.
She gathered our petals
That faded and fell, one by one,
Holding them close in her bosom.
We branched and leafed for her, in the gardens of Akçalı.
We budded for her and blossomed for her.
Before dawn came she ran to us,
Crossing the waterways and jumping over walls.
She hasn’t come this spring though we’ve waited long.’
- ‘Oh, water pump! Oh, water pump!’
- ‘Dirmiş girl please don’t cry.’ (70)

The dialogue between Dirmit and the water pump in my view displays all the important features of *Dear Shameless Death*. It is written in verse form and expresses the allegorical, fantastic and culture-specific features of the novel. TT2 seems to preserve the integrity of the unit and displays the rhythm and music.

It might be argued that the impact of Tekin's narrative in *Dear Shameless Death* stems from her short sentences strongly emphasizing the verbs which indicate the actions:

ST2

Huvat'ın şehirden getirdiği kadın pek yaman çıktı. Az zamanda tandırda ekmek pişirmeyi, koyun kırkmayı, tezek yapmayı, kuzu emiştirmeyi, tavuk teleğiyle çocuk düşürmeyi öğrendi. Bir erişte döküyordu, inci gibi. Halı kertmekte köylü gelinlerini, kızlarını yay bıraktı. Hatta ölü evlerinde ağıt bile düzmeye başladı. Derken ağzı da çevrildi. Aynı köylüler gibi konuşmaya başladı. Sadece, yolda önüne bir erkek çıkınca durup erkeğe yol vermesini öğrenemedi. Çiğneyip geçiyordu erkeğin önünü. (10)

TT2

The woman Huvat had brought from the city turned out to be surprisingly clever. In no time at all she learnt to bake bread in the *tandır* oven, to shear sheep, to dry cow's dung, to get the lambs to suckle and to bring on a miscarriage with a hen's feather. Her *erişte* pastry was as perfect as tiny pearls, and she outdid the young girls and women of the village at weaving colours into carpets. She even started composing dirges in houses where there was a death. After a while her speech changed too, and she began to speak just like the other villagers. One thing she never learnt, however, was how to stop and give way to the men she met on the road. Instead, she marched straight ahead with firm steps. (22)

ST2 indicates both the impact of the short sentences and the culture-specificity. It can be observed that TT2 has to be applauded for reflecting the culture-specific features of ST2, yet it is not literal in terms of the form of ST2. In TT2, there exists a tendency to combine short sentences, which in my view, reduces the effect of the actions. As a matter of fact,

combining paragraphs and short sentences is a general strategy throughout TT2. Therefore, TT2 reflects the content of ST2 successfully, whereas at times it fails to transmit the form and integrity.

An article about social, cultural and ideological development in Turkey by Joseph Kraft published in *The New Yorker* in 1984 indicates that the reviews which were published before the publication of Latife Tekin's novels in English help to form the target culture reception. Kraft posits that "[W]hile nobody advertises it to the outside world the clash between the traditional folk of the Anatolian uplands and the more modern elite of the coast dominates daily life" (Kraft 1984: 135). Kraft deals with the problems rose with the increased population of the major cities in Turkey because of migration and he notes, "all social services – including water, electricity, health and education – have been strained. But the most visible pressure has come in housing. In and around all the large Turkish cities lie sprawling tracts of jerry-built shelters" (137). It can be inferred from Kraft's words, that Latife Tekin's first novel *Dear Shameless Death*, can be considered a good example of the predicament of the people in the major cities who mostly migrated from rural areas and settled in *gecekondus*. He claims:

Turkey, like many other countries in the world, enjoyed a halcyon period of economic growth in the postwar years and the economic growth caused a *gecekondus* culture in the major cities. Those people who migrated from their hometowns or villages formed discrete clans of semifamilial groups, knit together by ties of kinship or

region or sect. Mere social mobility put the groups in invidious competition with one another, [and then] jostling for status deepened into feuding. Outsiders – including Communist agents but also right-wing nationalists allied with criminal elements – escalated the feuds to gang warfare. The cycle of settling scores by daily acts of violence intensified steadily and yielded the reign of terror that ended only when the military intervened in the third coup, on September 12, 1980” (Kraft 1984: 137).

Kraft notes that “a recent novel entitled ‘Dear Impudent Death’³⁹ by a young woman named Latife Tekin”, supports the thesis about *gecekondu*. In the following paragraphs of his article, Kraft notes quoting from a Turkish sociologist, Şerif Mardin that “The striking feature of the book is the resilience of the family. It is like a cork. It stays on top of the waves no matter what storms blow. A great many bad things happen, but the book never denounces the system. There is always hope that the right combination of circumstances will produce success” (Kraft 1984: 138). Kraft’s article was published long before the publication of, *Berji Kristin* and *Dear Shameless Death*, and it seems that it was the first critical review to appear on the Anglophone literary scene which mentioned Latife Tekin’s narrative.

When *Dear Shameless Death* was published in English in 2001, the publishing house (Marion Boyars) introduced the novel on the back cover page of the novel as follows:

A strange, magical story of a young girl growing up in modern Turkey, from her birth in a small rural village

³⁹ The article “Letter from Turkey” was published long before the publication of *Dear Shameless Death*, thus “Dear Impudent Death” is the translation of Joseph Kraft.

haunted by fairies and demons to her traumatic move to the big city. Based on her own childhood experiences, Latife Tekin's literary début marked a turning point in Turkish fiction. Concentrating on a daughter's struggle against her overbearing mother set against the pressures of a rapidly changing society, *Dear Shameless Death* is a fantastic, hallucinatory novel, with strong feminist insights about what it means to be a woman growing up in Turkey today.

The above introduction points out that the novel has an unfamiliar and impressive structure; thus it was considered a turning point in Turkish fiction. It mentions the theme and the style of the novel and specifically stresses the novel's feminist insight: The publisher's introduction hints at the feminist perspective which is an important aspect of *Dear Shameless Death*⁴⁰. The publisher's introduction is a paratextual feature which indicates how the original text was received in the source culture. Therefore, it functions as an instrument which provides the interaction between the source and target culture(s) reception.

The front and back cover pages⁴¹ present some other paratextual features which were taken from a number of reviews. An excerpt taken from John Berger's preface to *Berji Kristin* states, "Unforgettable...She has written down what before has never been written down". Another comment taken from a review published in *The Herald* claims that the novel is "only comparable with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*". A third one states that the novel is "a nihilistic wit

⁴⁰ I will deal with this point in detail in Chapter 4.

⁴¹ Front and back cover pages can be seen in appendix 11.

reminiscent of Samuel Beckett”, and the fourth one defines the novel as “a small masterpiece of beauty”. The paratextual features appeared on the front and back cover pages of the novel display that *Dear Shameless Death* was presented to the Anglophone literary world in a way that caused it to benefit from the reputation of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. As a matter of fact, all the excerpts on the cover pages were taken from the reviews which were written for *Berji Kristin* long before the publication of *Dear Shameless Death*.

One of the most significant paratextual features is Saliha Paker’s introduction to *Dear Shameless Death* which gives insight to Tekin’s literature and life. Paker’s introduction functions as a resource in the target culture(s) reception of the novel, similar to her introduction to *Berji Kristin*. The introduction highlights not only the source culture reception of the novel but also appears to be a primary reference for the rewriters in the target culture. Paker describes the novel as a work of fiction which “captivated and mystified the Turkish readership when it was first published in 1983” (Paker 2001: 8) and distinguishes Tekin’s position from the other representatives of Turkish fiction:

Dear Shameless Death has nothing to do with the conventions of realistic Turkish fiction, rural or urban. Nor does it represent a subsequent literary ‘phase’. Along with Latife Tekin’s four later novels, it is the first in a unique corpus, which in essence, not only defies such conventions but also explodes them. (Paker 2001: 9)

Saliha Paker also posits the significance of the language which Tekin makes use of in her novels. She specifies, “[...] language has remained the central constitutive agent in [Latife Tekin’s novels]. The internal dynamics of her fiction have called upon her to construct a different style for each, which gains an increasingly deconstructive thrust in her later novels” (Paker 2001: 11). Paker draws attention to the narrative of Tekin, which combines fantasy and supernatural elements with traditional story telling techniques of folk literature and “medieval Islamic heroic narratives” (Paker 2001: 12). Paker also mentions the notion that Tekin’s narrative holds traces of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (ibid.).

Another aspect which Paker states, citing Berna Moran, is that “the two worlds present in *Dear Shameless Death*: the sacred world of beliefs and the material world which overlap and become one in the peasant villager’s perception of reality. These gradually become differentiated as the narrative follows the migration to the city, engendering ‘an ideological conflict’ between Dirmit and her family”(Paker 2001: 13). With respect to these statements Paker claims that Tekin displays two perspectives: an insider and an outsider perspective. Paker speculates that there exists “some thematic links between the so-called primitive and modern worlds in *Dear Shameless Death*, regarding the functions of djinns and communists” which at the same time appear to be

the representatives of the “other” in the novel (Paker 2001: 14). Moreover, she points out that Tekin employing fantasy, or let us say magical realism, “has simply textured an unusual, ‘authentic’ folkloric interpretation of a community’s culture which is both homogeneous and capable of being easily captured in realistic terms for a realistic narrative [but more significant than that] she has subverted the homogeneity of such an interpretation, making ‘otherness’ visible, both within that culture, and in the much broader modern cultural framework in which it is located” (Paker 2001: 16).

Finally, Paker touches upon John Berger’s comment on the French version of the novel, “Latife Tekin...too knows that life stories are composed of gestures and murmurs, rather than of words and deeds. This book (about her native village) is a carpet of immutable gestures woven by countrywomen. Each gesture is a white knot, a black knot, or a brightly colored one, tied fast by four nimble fingers, at the end of our dark century. I know of no other storyteller with hands like Latife Tekin⁴²” (ibid.). John Berger expresses applauding remarks about Tekin’s narrative in *Dear Shameless Death* as he did about *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*. Informative and complimentary remarks made by both John Berger and Saliha Paker have become a considerable resource for the reception of Tekin’s work in the target culture(s). For instance, in his review on *Dear Shameless Death*, Aamer Hussein states

⁴² Translation by Saliha Paker.

that the introduction by the translator informed them that “the novel mirrors the chronology of its author’s life” and notes “This useful knowledge helps us map the journey Dirmit’s family makes, and to mark the stories of her migrant protagonists’ inventive attempts to join the urban labour force with time-posts of our own” (Hussein 2001). Another review by Keith Hitchins seems to have benefited from Paker’s introduction. He notes “Latife Tekin’s novel caused a sensation in the Turkish literary world when it appeared in 1983, because it broke sharply with the realist techniques of depicting the village and its inhabitants” (Hitchins 2001: 234). Hitchins’ review, in this respect, can also be considered an indicator of interaction between the reception of source and target culture(s).

Now let us look in more detail at what kind of critical responses *Dear Shameless Death* received in the Anglophone literary world. It is noticeable that, when compared to *Berji Kristin*, *Dear Shameless Death* received less critical responses from the literary professionals. A few critical articles appeared in British or American journals and newspapers and some of them appeared on the Internet. Almost all the criticisms *Dear Shameless Death* received refer to its literary value, theme and style, yet only one of them, by Amer Hussein, touches upon the translation:

An elegant translation indicates Tekin's considerable gift for phrasing and image. (Hussein 2001)

Hussein, in his review compliments the translation and it can be inferred from the comment that the translation of the novel reflects the originality of the narrative. Except for this tiny but appreciative remark about the translation, the rest of the reviews and critical articles deal with Tekin's narrative and the subject of her novel:

Drawing extensively on her own experiences, [Latife Tekin] writes as an insider who honors traditional beliefs and practices rather than as an outsider, a reformer or Europeanizer, who would turn the village away from its ancestral roots. (Hitchins 2001: 234)

This poetic novel, highly praised in Turkey, is at last available in English. Semi-autobiographical, it tells of Dirmir and her family, who move from a small village to the rapidly changing city of Istanbul in the 1970s. (Aldred <http://www.bookmarks.uk.com/html/latest/nl2001-15-1.pdf>)

This book is a moving and vivid depiction of the experiences of a young girl growing up in modern Turkey, set against a backdrop of extreme change as her traditional family moves from a rural to an urban environment. It's a whirlwind of a book that rushes you from event to event. (http://fetchbook.info/search_0714530549/tab_reviews.html)

When this dazzling début broke through the cloud of silence in Turkey after the military intervention in 1983, it was hailed as 'magic'. Tracing Tekin's own life, from childhood to late adolescence, it projects an unusual view of existence that combines supernatural elements with popular religion and culture. (<http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio?inkey=62-0714530549-0>)

The above reviews mention some specific points regarding the reception of *Dear Shameless Death*, such as Tekin's insider position and the autobiographical aspect of the novel. Moreover, these reviews

addressing the success of the novel in the source culture, reveal the interplay between the receptions of the cultures.

Another point, which was highlighted by Aamer Hussein, seems to be important in a comparative perspective. Hussein states the likeliness between the narrative of Latife Tekin and of Toni Morrison:

The choice of a mythic mode adds a different dimension to Tekin's project: she may, like Americans such as Toni Morrison, have consciously crafted an idiosyncratically lyrical idiom to voice the sorrows of her own, marginalised group. (Hussein 2001)

Previously mentioned, Tekin's narrative was claimed to have similarities with of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, of Samuel Beckett and even of James Joyce. In addition to these Hussein indicates the comparability of Tekin's narrative to Toni Morrison in creating a lyrical language for the people with whom she shared the same experiences. Finally Hussein emphasizes the originality of Tekin's language and narrative:

Narrative throughout is omniscient, reporting more than it depicts. Manic humour and near-tragedy appear through a veil of detachment. The novel disregards conventions: dialogue is scant, days pass by in a phrase and continuous tenses proliferate. Tension is created by the clash of dreams and the diurnal and colour and design replace the mechanics of plot. (Hussein 2001)

A selection of such excerpts taken from book reviews and critical articles underlines that *Dear Shameless Death* has mostly received positive responses. However, sometimes both positive and negative criticisms can be found together. Lisa Allardice, for instance, notes in her

review that “Latife Tekin, in her fantastical [and] largely autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death*, charmingly tells of a little Turkish girl’s journey to independence through poetry and education” (Allardice 2001). This statement praises the narrative. However, as Allardice continues her review she states that the narrative technique and fantastic elements used in the novel sometimes bothers her, “Reminders of the modern world, such as miniskirts and nylon tights, become anomalous in this grotesquely fabulous land of djinn and fairies. The incessant spitting in babies’ mouths; pissing up walls and boiling donkey’s tongues, combined with Tekin’s breathless prose, made me feel queasy” (Allardice 2001). It might be argued that the unfamiliarity with culture-specific, fantastic and folkloric elements in Tekin’s narrative at times might be regarded as disturbing. Another negative, critical view Allardice espouses forward is related to the inspiration of Marquez in Tekin’s narrative. Fantasy and magical realism remain indispensable components of Tekin’s narrative, and critical responses to her novels –*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* – received both in the source and the target culture(s) indicate this aspect. I discuss magical realism in Tekin’s narrative and the critical responses she received with respect to magical realism in Chapter 4.

3.2. Conclusion

In this chapter I tried to analyze the reception of Latife Tekin's literary works in the target culture(s). My main focus was on the reception of Tekin's works in the Anglophone literary world. My survey on the target culture(s) reception of Tekin's *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* revealed that both of the novels received mostly complimentary remarks and positive criticisms. It has been observed that a limited number of reviews deal with the translation itself. Reviews and critical articles, in general emphasize the originality of Tekin's narrative, language, and the theme of her novels.

Chapter 4

The authorial image of Latife Tekin shaped within the source and target culture(s)

In this chapter, I focus on Latife Tekin's authorial image, which was shaped in the source and target culture(s), in close relation with the reception of her literary works. I try to provide a comparative account of the reception of Tekin's works within the source and target culture(s). Firstly, I dwell on the source culture image and then deal with the target culture image of Tekin. As was mentioned earlier in the introduction, the reason why I choose to analyze the situation in the source culture first is not because I apply a source-oriented method but because I am aware of the existence of a particular interaction between the source culture reception and target culture(s) reception of Tekin's literary works. Since the source culture reception precedes the reception of the translations, I first analyze Tekin's authorial image in Turkey.

4.1. The image of Latife Tekin shaped within the source culture

When she was nine she moved to İstanbul with her family. She completed her primary and secondary education in İstanbul and graduated from Beşiktaş Kız Lisesi in 1974. She worked at İstanbul Telefon Başmüdürlüğü as a state officer (1976-77). After she had left this job, she earned her livelihood by writing. (*Tanzimattan Bugüne Edebiyatçılar Ansiklopedisi* 2003: 810)

[Dokuz yaşındayken ailesiyle beraber İstanbul'a yerleşti. İlk ve orta öğrenimini İstanbul'da gördü; Beşiktaş Kız Lisesi'nden mezun oldu (1974). İstanbul Telefon Başmüdürlüğü'nde memur olarak çalıştı (1976-77). Bu işten ayrıldıktan sonra başka bir işte çalışmadı ve sadece yazarlığı uğraş edindi.]

In this section, I discuss the authorial image of Latife Tekin which has been shaped in the source culture. Tekin's literary journey of twenty-two years, which started with *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*), had eight main stops, including her latest stop *Unutma Bahçesi* (*The Garden of Forgetting*). Each stop on the way can fairly be considered a turn – gentle or sharp – which leads her to another and different stop.

Tekin became a famous writer within a short time with the publication of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. The novel itself became a controversial best-seller and five editions were published within a year. Therefore, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* was influential in constructing Tekin's authorial image. The writer's own life story also played an important part. Tekin's self-representation appeared on the back cover of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (published by Adam Yayınları, İstanbul) as a personal note about her life and her first literary work. Tekin's self-introduction also appeared in Saliha Parker's introduction to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*:

I was born in 1957 in the village of Karacafenk, near the town of Bünyan in the province of Kayseri. I started school as soon as I learnt to walk. The school was the men's lounge in our house. I learnt to read and write as I played with the djinns under the divans. Djinns and fairies used to live under the divans in Karacafenk. I spent my childhood among them, secretly joining their community. I went to

see their homes, their weddings and learnt their language, their day games and night games. My father used to work in İstanbul. I forgot now who told me that my mother was a strange woman with a broken heart. She was literate she knew how to sew, give injections and speak Kurdish and Arabic. She used to enquire from the gypsies that came to the village about places and people unknown to me. Her searchings for her past were the first pains that touched my childhood. My father used to come back from İstanbul with sacks full of money and gather the villagers around him. There were strange gadgets, magic metals in and around our home: a clock, a radio, a gramophone, a big blue bus, a harvester, a water pump, a truck and a tractor. I didn't really know what they were for.

In 1966 I came to live in İstanbul. It felt like a sharp pain that split up my childhood. Unfulfilled dreams tore apart the people that I grew up with. My father quickly became working-class, and then gradually fell into unemployment. Three brothers worked on construction sites. I finished high school, slipping away like a trembling shadow from seven brothers and sisters. I paid the price of going to school in fear and loneliness, subjected to a thousand denials and pressures and buffeted unimaginably. I fought hard to keep up with the city and was bruised all over. During my struggles I fell apart from those that I grew up with. But I resisted so that I wouldn't lose my own values, my language and the constant and passionate love that those people bore for me. This book is the reward for my resistance, from the people I grew up with. As for the narrative, I wish I had broken it up and written it sooner and more breathlessly⁴³. (Paker 1993: 9-10)

Those who read Tekin's *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and her self-introduction undoubtedly noticed the affinity between her own life story and the story depicted in the novel. It was claimed that the novel was auto-biographical. In an interview with Atilla Özkırımlı, Tekin complained that it was her interviews that caught the critics' and reviewers' attention

⁴³ Translation by Saliha Paker.

rather than the novel, *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (Tekin 1984a: 7). Özkırımlı supported Tekin's view and stated that "not even a comprehensive analysis which aimed to consider the novel at length has been made on Tekin's novel" (ibid.). Regarding these viewpoints, it can be hypothesized that the life story of the twenty-five year old woman writer, who presented herself publicly in an authentic way, was more attractive than her literary début. Besides, wasn't it an autobiographical novel?

It seems evident that the first image determined for Tekin was not related to her literary works, but rather to her own life and personal background. The publication and success of the first novel made literary professionals approach Tekin with suspicion (*Nokta* 1984, Ateş 1985), because in contrast to most writers she was not from a middle class urban family, but a woman from a village whose life and language were split up with migration and "not even a short story of hers was published before" (Memet Fuat 2001: 633). With respect to this, Eréndiz Atasü, a novelist, states that a "sociological research conducted in 1985, reveals that almost all of the women who are known as 'writers' by the public were raised in a middle class urban society in which the reforms of the Kemalist Turkish Republic had been adopted. An exceptional figure is Latife Tekin whose roots go back to the village" (Atasü, 1996: 12) [1985 yılında yapılmış bir sosyoloji araştırması, kamuoyunun 'yazar' olarak tanıdığı kadınların neredeyse tümünün, Kemalist Cumhuriyet

devrimlerinin özümlendiği kent orta sınıfın ortamlarından yetiştiğini ortaya koyar. Ayırksı örnek, köy kökenli Latife Tekin'dir]. It seems that Tekin held a position in contrast to the general situation of woman writers because of her starkly different background. Moreover, as mentioned in the first chapter, her narrative did not have any resemblance to those by male writers who came from villages. Therefore, Tekin was claimed to be a phenomenon mostly on account of the inconsistency between her life experience and her success in literature. However, Tekin's life experience was closely related to her narrative.

Tekin's self-representation and the first impressions of the literary professionals stress the concept of destitution in her life and work. The most significant features discussed by literary professionals were the concepts of poverty and destitution. It would not be apt to state that the subject of destitution was attributed to Tekin merely by the literary professionals. Tekin herself, at every opportunity, presented destitution as a concept and mostly as a feeling which she experienced and adopted. She notes in an interview titled "Yazı ve Yoksulluk" [Writing and Destitution] that she defines herself an "insider" destitute [Ben kendimi 'içeride' bir yoksul olarak tarif ediyorum] (Tekin 1987c: 52). Turkish literary critics labeled her as the writer of impoverishment mostly because it was presented to the Turkish literary world as a ready-made subject by Tekin who defined herself as an 'insider' who had experienced poverty and

constantly stated that she aimed to transmit the “murmur” (Gürbilek 1999: 47) of the destitute people into a language - not as a writer - but as a translator (Tekin 1989: 68).

If we deal with the position Tekin holds as a writer, the image that we come across will be a quite different one. An interview published in *Hürriyet* describes Tekin as a “writer who considers herself outside literature” [Kendisini edebiyat dışı gören bir yazar] (Tekin 1988). Such a view must be based on a previous interview (with İskender Savaşır) in which Tekin notes “I position myself somewhere out of literature. I did not start writing as if I had a connection with the Turkish literary adventure or the tradition of World Literature. On the contrary, I wrote without feeling an emotional link, and I did not positiothis tradition against me. Despite these, I’ve already stated the reason why I write. I consider writing as a part of our political adventure” (Tekin 1987a: 137) [Ben kendimi edebiyat dışı bir yere koyuyorum. Ben kendimi Türkiye’deki edebiyat serüvenine ya da dünyadaki edebiyat geleneğine bağlı görerek yazmaya başlamadım. Aksine bu geleneği karşıma alarak yazdım; üstelik pek öyle bir duygusal bağ da hissetmeden. Bütün bunlara rağmen niye yazdığım sorusunun da cevabını vermiştim zaten: Yazmayı bizim politik serüvenimizin bir devamı olarak görüyordum]. It is known that Tekin was politically active as a leftist, particularly within a women’s organization before the military coup in 1980 (Tekin in Özer 2005). In a reply to a question on whether she was

a leftist or not, Tekin said that “leftism, for me, is an idea which is related to changing the system” [Solculuk benim için düzenin değiştirilmesi tasarısıyla ilgili bir şey] (Tekin 1987b: 52). She stated “When I became a leftist at seventeen, it was the result of a rebellion, independent of any theory and any organization. I revolted against the definition of being a woman, young, and destitute which was attributed to me” (ibid.) [Ben on yedi yaşında solcu olduğumda, bu bir isyanın sonucuydu. Herhangi bir teoriden örgütten bağımsız olarak gerçekleştirilmiş, bana dayatılan kadın olma, genç olma, yoksul olma tanımlarına karşı girilmiş bir isyanın sonucuydu]. Tekin noted that she attributed an aspect of her political believes to the pain that she had experienced; therefore, she writes to share the pain (Tekin 1987c: 135).

Tekin’s third novel *Gece Dersleri* (*Night Lessons*) in which Tekin criticizes the leftist thinking which chooses not to understand destitution as a concept and not to overcome its alien stance towards the culture of destitute people (Tekin in Özer 2005) can be perceived in the light of this thinking. When *Gece Dersleri* was published in 1986, it was harshly criticized both by the Turkish left wing and the literary world. In relation to this situation Tekin expresses that what she had discussed in *Gece Dersleri* could have been received as a contribution to political arguments. However, almost all the readers with a political interest in the novel were scandalized by the subject matter, and it was a real

disappointment to Tekin (or the recipients)? (Tekin in Özer 2005: 101-102). It can be stated that with the publication of *Gece Dersleri*, Tekin's image was shaped as a young woman and a destitute leftist. *Gece Dersleri* added the aspect of leftism to Tekin's image which revolved around her experiences of poverty and their reflections in her writing. Tekin's following novel, *Buzdan Kılıçlar* strengthened her image and its association with destitution. As Murat Belge says, "Tekin demonstrates, in her writing, that destitution is not an objective social status which can be measured by merely one's income bracket. For a person who was born into poverty, destitution is a culture or a world view in the broadest sense" (Belge n.d.) [Latife Tekin, yoksulluğun yalnızca bir gelir dilimiyle ölçülebilir bir nesnel toplumsal statü olmadığını anlatıyor. Yoksulluk, yoksulluğun içine doğmuş bir insan açısından, en genel anlamıyla bir kültür ya da bir dünya görüşü]. *Buzdan Kılıçlar* and Tekin's subsequent novel *Aşk İşaretleri* displayed that the characters undergo not only a materialistic poverty but also are deprived of their language. Fatma Akerson, states that *Buzdan Kılıçlar* is about how people live and how they can express their experiences, and it is very difficult to live unless we can explain something (Akerson 1990: 4). Therefore, it can be claimed that after the publication of *Aşk İşaretleri* deprivation and destitution became the most significant concepts which were attributed to Tekin's authorial image in the source culture. In the light of the above mentioned reasons, it might

be speculated that the authorial image constructed for Tekin in the source culture revolves around her being a leftist woman writer, who depicts deprivation and destitution with regard to her own experiences.

4.2. The image of Latife Tekin shaped within/for the target culture(s)

Before I proceed with the analysis of Latife Tekin's authorial image in the target culture(s), let me clarify the reason why I made an emphasis on "the image shaped within and for the target culture(s)" in the title. In my view, the authorial image constructed in the target culture(s) has been to a certain extent influenced by the image shaped within the source culture. Thus, there exist an interaction between two cultures in terms of reception and image-shaping. It may be argued that an author's image in the target culture is composed of the authorial image shaped for and within the target culture(s). I do not claim that the rewriters who shape the image for the target culture(s) merely operate from the source culture. On the contrary, those rewriters operate from either source culture or an intercultural space, bridging the image shaped within the source culture and the target culture(s).

Target culture(s) must have formed the major authorial image about Tekin from John Berger's preface and Saliha Paker's Introductions to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death*.

Therefore, how Berger and Paker introduced Tekin to the target culture(s) has a significant influence on Tekin's authorial image in the target culture(s). Paker's introduction provides the reader with insightful information about the Tekin's narrative, personal and literary background. Moreover, Paker's introduction provided the reader with key aspects in terms of Tekin's authorial image, "Latife Tekin stood as a challenge to the mainstream fiction of the 1980s by rejecting 'realism' in favour of a highly metaphorical perception of reality in which fantasy is an essential element" (Paker 1993: 12). Paker's words introduce Tekin as a writer who breaks the conventions of the Turkish novel and who become an alternative voice in the source literary scene. In addition to that, Paker states how Tekin defines herself as a writer, pointing out Tekin has assumed "the position of a detached but devoted narrator, rather than a patronising intellectual onlooker" (Paker 1993: 13). It may be inferred that Paker gives strength to the idea that Tekin remains an insider who gives voice to her own impoverished community; Paker transmits this view to the target culture(s). Thus, Paker presented Tekin to the target culture(s) as a narrator who writes from the inside, and positions herself on the same level as the characters depicted in her novels.

The authorial image shaped for the target culture(s) has traces of Tekin's source culture image. A biographical note written in *An Anthology*

of *Turkish Literature* edited by Kemal Silay, introduces Latife Tekin as follows:

Tekin, Latife (b. 1957) She was born into a poor family with seven siblings. She finished high school under very difficult conditions and came to İstanbul in 1966. In many of her works, she narrates her life experiences in a fictionalized framework. *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, for example, is a fictional account of her own childhood and adolescence. *Gece Dersleri*, a novel with many autobiographical details, reflects the complex experiences of a woman's world. Its language is densely metaphorical and lyrical, allowing a multiplicity of readings. Her book *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*, which focuses on a woman from a shanty-town, was translated into English as *Tales from the Garbage Hills*. (Silay 1996: 627)

In the above biographical note, Silay transmits the most significant features of Tekin's source culture image to the target culture(s) audience, emphasizing Tekin's personal background, in particular, her poverty and stating that Tekin's novels have an autobiographical aspect. Thus, Silay's biographical note is a resource for the target culture(s) for gaining information about Tekin. One point in Silay's note seems to be striking - he notes that Tekin's *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* is about a woman from a shanty-town - however; *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* does not portray a woman's life in a shanty-town. On the contrary, as mentioned previously the novel depicts the life that Flower Hill people undergo in their squatter settlements. Silay informs the target culture(s) audience with misleading information, and it is evident that this kind of incorrect information might also become a part of an author's image.

Şavkar Altınel who can be considered another intercultural agent, in his review on *Berji Kristin* constructs such an image for Tekin:

Latife Tekin was born in a small village in central Anatolia. When she was nine, however, her family like thousands of others before and since, moved to Istanbul in search of work and she grew up in that sprawling, chaotic, bi-continental metropolis. It was this not atypical Third World experience of being wrenched from a rural environment to be thrown into urban life at the deep end that led her vivid and entertaining (if, in some ways, also irritating) fairy-tale-like first novel *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (Dear Cheeky Death) which soon turned her into a literary star in her native country when it appeared in 1983. (Altınel 1993: 21)

Altınel emphasizes that Tekin is an author who comes from a village and states the influence of the migration she experienced on her novel *Dear Shameless Death*. One significant point is that Altınel criticizes *Dear Shameless Death* as a “vivid and entertaining” but at times “irritating” novel. However, he does not mention the reasons why he found the novel “irritating”.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Tekin’s two novels *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* were published by Marion Boyars Publishers. Therefore, how Marion Boyars presented Tekin must also be important in the image-shaping process. An introductory note on the web page of Marion Boyars Publishers presents Latife Tekin as follows, “A major best seller in her native Turkey, Latife Tekin maintains a politically active presence and has written a number of literary works. Her first novel, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, was published

by Marion Boyars to great acclaim” (<http://www.marionboyars.co.uk/Specific%20title%20pages/shame.html>). It can be inferred that the reason why the publisher stresses Tekin’s “politically active position” as a productive writer might be because reflections of Tekin’s position are observable in her writing. In addition to the introductory note on the web page of Marion Boyars, Catheryn Kilgarrieff, the owner of Marion Boyars Publishers, states that:

Modern Turkish literature reveals a society in direct conflict with itself. A number of complex dichotomies struggle to resolve themselves in the works of Turkey’s leading authors: rural versus urban; cultural diversity versus repression; cruelty versus beauty; fantasy versus reality. This reflected by the country’s most talented storytellers who often take ‘the double’ as a central theme – storytellers of such stature as Latife Tekin, Erendiz Atasü and Buket Uzuner, three of Turkey’s most outstanding women writers (Kilgarrieff 2001: 1).

As for Kilgarrieff, Tekin is an “outstanding woman writer” (ibid.) who reflects, presumably, the dichotomies of rural and urban, fantasy and reality. It occurs to me that rewriters from the target culture(s) have a tendency to associate the writers from Turkish literary environment with the dichotomies. For instance, the literary works of Orhan Pamuk, one of the best-seller authors who is quite famous in the target culture(s), are associated with the dichotomy of East and West. In her MA thesis, Melike Yılmaz points out that almost every rewriter touched upon the “meritorious juxtaposition of dichotomies in Pamuk’s themes (East/West, ancient/modern and the like)” (Yılmaz 2004). The target culture(s)

association of most of the Turkish authors with these dichotomies could be an interesting subject of another study. Here I will continue with the survey of the authorial image of Latife Tekin.

Killgarrieff defines Tekin as a writer who has achieved great success in the source literary environment with her *Dear Shameless Death*, exploring “fantasy, not only as a means of escapism, but as an authentic and indigenous way of reconstructing an individual experience, placed her at the forefront of new Turkish writing” (Killgarrieff 2001: 1). Killgarrieff draws a portrait of a skilled author pointing out Tekin’s achievement in the source literary system and emphasizes the influence of Tekin’s individual experience on her first novel. At this point, it might be noted that Killgarrieff’s comments on Tekin are generally based on Paker’s introductions. Another comment concerning the reflections of Tekin’s own life experiences on her narrative is likely to be based on Paker’s introductions as well. Aamar Hussein, a reviewer, supports the idea that “the novel [*Dear Shameless Death*] mirrors the chronology of its author’s life. Like Dirmi, her fictional alter ego, Tekin spent her childhood in an Anatolian village and moved, aged nine, to İstanbul” (Hussein 2001). It might be speculated that the comments of Killgarrieff and Hussein remain as evidence of the interaction between the cultures in terms of reception and image-shaping.

In her article “Comets on the Turkish Literary Horizon: Woman Writers”, Güneli Gün who can be considered another intercultural agent, states in that the Turkish literary audience responds surprisingly to the courageous efforts of the contemporary women writers and that Latife Tekin was one of those writers who “catches the public’s attention by speaking about the unspeakable, the unacceptable, the embarrassing, the outré, or the Well-Known Secrets of the culture” (Gün 1996: 578). She defines Tekin as a writer “who has given the underprivileged masses a voice that can be heard by the world of literature” (Gün 1993:886). Gün’s statement seems to concur with Tekin’s own presentation of herself as a translator who gives voice to destitute people. Gün also posits that what has “the surprising enrichment of [Tekin’s] unadulterated, irrepressible, inventive, hijinks language” provided Turkish literature is even more impressive (Gün 1993:886).

One of the aspects that reviewers make use of in constructing the authorial image of Tekin is her position in the source culture literary system. David Barchard, a reviewer, refers to Tekin as “one of the best-known Turkish novelists writing today” (Barchard 1993: 18) and a review which appeared on *Ms. Arlington* describes Tekin as “one of Turkey’s best-selling authors” (*Ms. Arlington* 1993: 74). Keith Hitchins notes “Latife Tekin’s novel caused a sensation in the Turkish literary world when it appeared in 1983, because it broke sharply with the realist techniques of

depicting the village and its inhabitants” (Hitchins 2001: 234). David Kemp, likewise, states that “In Turkey itself, Tekin represents a new direction...Tekin has succeeded in forging a new style that marks her as a truly original voice from the other Turkey, the part that the glossy holiday brochures never reach” (Kemp 1993). In addition to these, Jale Parla describes the appearance of *Dear Shameless Death* as an explosion on the Turkish literary scene, “When Latife Tekin’s *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* [The dear unabashed death] exploded on the Turkish literary scene in 1983, and everybody knew that here was genuinely new stuff—new in characterization, narrative, freshness of vision, strength of conviction. The book won unanimous acclaim as the portrait of the artist as a young girl” (Parla 2003: 544-545). These reviews deal with the position Tekin holds in the source literary system and how she has provided a new insight into the Turkish literary environment. And these reviews, in my view, constructs an image for Tekin as a writer who has broken the conventions of the source culture novel, thus, she has become controversial but she is also perceived as an authentic writer. The reviews seem to reflect the image that the writer and what she depicts in her novels are distinctive; thus, they are worth reading. Jale Parla’s statement about the novel *Dear Shameless Death* also attracts attention for another reason. Parla’s article was published in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* in 2003, which is two years after the publication of *Dear Shameless Death* in the United Kingdom and

the United States. Nevertheless, Parla does not use *Dear Shameless Death* – the title of the English translation of Tekin’s literary début published in 2001 – in her article but she rather uses the Turkish title along with her own translation (The Dear Unabashed Death) of the title. It is inevitable to think about the reason why Jale Parla does not use the English title *Dear Shameless Death* when referring to the novel. The situation reveals an impression that Parla ignores the publication of the English translation *Dear Shameless Death* and inquiring minds cannot help thinking what point she is attempting to make.

Some of the rewriters construct an image of Latife Tekin according to the themes that she depicts in her novels. However, one of the sociologists in Turkey, Şerif Mardin, who in the present context can be considered an intercultural agent, notes that “Latife Tekin, a contemporary Turkish novelist tried to describe the culture of the Turkish periphery” (Mardin 1989: 7). Mardin refers to the marginality of the people whose tales are depicted in Tekin’s novels. Mardin’s approach to the subject is from a sociological perspective and it can be inferred from Mardin’s words that what he attributes to Tekin is a portrait of a writer who has common sense and is in a way responsible for the social problems of the society that she lives in. In relation to the themes Tekin depicts in her novels, a researcher Fatma Gözlükaya Tütüncü states that “Tekin narrates the magical world of the poor who incessantly murmur with a

specific system of silent signs and a hidden language that is unknown to the non-poor, that exposes the limits of dominant language, that resists the so-called public use of reason” (Gözlükaya-Tütüncü <http://www.cultstud.org/crossroads/session/tutuncu.html>). Joseph Kraft, also expresses that Tekin’s first novel *Dear Shameless Death* reflects “a *gecekondu* culture” (Kraft 1984: 137) which can be stated as “the culture of periphery” in Mardin’s words.

In addition to these reviews, Deidre Levinson supports the idea that Tekin writes with a strong empathy for the destitute people and tries to become a voice for them, stating that “Tekin appears to have written the novel for [the Flower Hill folk or for *gecekondu* people as a whole]. It is a small masterpiece of rare beauty by a writer whose fierce love for her depredated people never threatens her ironic detachment, any more than her impassioned witness to their suffering outdoes her revelation of the unremitting vitality, curiosity and life-saving capacity for wonder with which they contrive to surmount the misery of their condition. In this way, if in this way alone, the *gecekondu* people have been rendered a great and abiding service” (Levinson 1993: 30).

In relation to the theme depicted in Tekin’s *Berji Kristin*, David Barchard notes that “For the first time a casement has been opened for the Western reader on to Latife Tekin’s seething, irrepressible but forlorn world on the shanty fringes of Istanbul” (Barchard 1993: 20). What John

Berger specifies in his preface to *Berji Kristin* supports the idea that Tekin has written something new which has never written before and with the translations of her novels, her authentic story was presented to the world. Berger expresses that “The originality of Tekin’s mature book is the direct consequence of its story. Before her no shanty-town had entered literature – had entered written narrative – as an entity in itself...In Tekin’s *Tales from the Garbage Hills*, a shanty-town community becomes the centre of the world, holding the stage and addressing the sky (Berger 1993: 6).

A striking point reveals itself concerning Tekin’s authorial image as a leftist writer from an Islamic culture. A review by Martyn Bedford stresses that Latife Tekin is a writer from an Islamic culture (Bedford 1993). Leslie Moushey in her review on the Moslem women writers who portray the stories of Moslem women, deals with Latife Tekin with some other writers. Moushey expresses that the books about the Moslems by Moslem writers can be considered a gateway for a better understanding of Moslem cultures for Americans (Moushey 1994: 49). She notes, “*Berji Kristin*, by Latife Tekina is not about Moslems but has the quality of inclusiveness that invites the reader in” (ibid.). Moushey separates *Berji Kristin* from the other novels, arguing that the novel is not about the Moslems; however, she attributes a Moslem writer image to Latife Tekin, firstly reviewing her work alongside other Moslem women writers and

secondly miswriting her name as “Latife Tekina” (ibid.) as if it is an Arabic name. Latife Tekin’s name can be found as a writer on the reading list of a course entitled “Engendering and Experience: Women in the Islamic Traditions” at The Intercollegiate Women’s Studies Center of Claremont College(s). It is stated in the course description, that the course aims to “Explore the normative base of the roles and status of women and examines Muslim women’s experience in various parts of the Muslim world in order to appreciate the situation and the challenges facing Muslim women” (<http://www.scrippscollege.edu/dept/Wstudies/spring2005/courses.htm>). Regarding these indicators, it can be claimed that an image of a Muslim writer from an Islamic culture is attributed to Latife Tekin by some of the literary professionals. At this point I would like to note that contrary to the image of a Muslim writer from an Islamic culture, Latife Tekin is also defined as a “very secularist leftist author” by Stephan Guth (Guth 2000: 6) and it might be stated that a “secularist leftist author” image is more compatible with the source culture image of Tekin than an image of a Muslim writer.

Another striking review, which was published in *The Economist*, defines Latife Tekin as a “disobedient child of Atatürk”⁴⁴ (*The Economist* 2001: 80), along with Orhan Pamuk. The reviewer claims that “Latife Tekin, [like Orhan Pamuk], is a disobedient child of Atatürk” because her

⁴⁴ Saliha Paker also touches upon this review in her article “Reading Turkish Novelists and Poets in English Translation: 1949 – 2004” (Paker 2004: 15).

novel *Dear Shameless Death* portrays “the world of the Anatolian village which [most of the critics on the Turkish literary scene] and Atatürk (the founder of The Turkish republic) either ignored or looked down on” (*The Economist* 2001: 80). It occurs to me that the reviewer was given wrong information about the founder of The Turkish Republic and his approach to Anatolian village folk. Atatürk’s principles and reforms, which the foundation of The Turkish Republic were based on, never ignored the Anatolian village folk. Therefore, the “disobedient child” image attributed to Tekin, just because she mostly portrays the lives of villagers, seems to be groundless and also inaccurate..

Consequently, it can be specified that the authorial image shaped within the target culture(s) seems to be freed from the author’s personal background when compared to the source culture image. The most significant difference between the images shaped within the source and target culture(s) is about the factors that affected the construction of the authorial image in the first place. The former, basically seems to be influenced by the author’s own life story and her self-presentation in the public or in the media. However, the latter tends to be influenced by the position that the author holds in the source culture literary system, with the authenticity of the story she portrays in her novels.

4.3. Attitudes towards *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* on the Anglophone literary scene

As was mentioned before, the reception of a literary work is inevitably influenced by “the inside and outside control mechanisms existing in the literary system” (Lefevere 1992: 14) and the extratextual materials provided by these mechanisms. As a matter of fact, any kind of interpretation, transmission and manipulation can be considered a reception. Therefore, while these literary control mechanisms influence the reception of literary works, they, at the same time become the components of the concept of reception. When the matter in question is the reception of a translated literary text, the target reader tends to be more dependent on the extratextual material provided by rewriters (Linn 2003: 57-58). Thus, the reception of a translated literary text highlights some specific aspects attributed to the text and contributes to the construction of the image of the writer. In the case of *Berji Kristin Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death* a wide range of book reviews and critical articles can be collected under a variety of subtitles according to their emphasis: (1) marginality (2) timelessness (3) cross-culturality (4) magical realism and (5) the feminist perspective. In the following sections, I would like to discuss these aspects which the reviewers and critics emphasize.

4.3.1. Marginality

How literary professionals define Latife Tekin's characters in *Berji Kristin* and *Dear Shameless Death* seems to be significant in relation to the reception of Tekin's works. A variety of definitions I came across in the critical sources are as follows, "Wordless people of *gecekondus*" (Yalçın-Heckmann 1995: 670), "marginalized people" (*Ms. Arlington* 1993: 74), "destitute people" (Steinberg 1992: 490), "primitive society" (Corbett 2003 <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>, underprivileged masses" (Gün 1993: 886), "rural migrants" (http://fetchbook.info/search_0714530115/tab_reviews.html), "marginal community" (*Kirkus Reviews* 1992 <http://www.turkuazguide.net/index.html?turkishliterature.html>). Most of the reviewers and critics point out that Tekin in *Berji Kristin* and *Dear Shameless Death* portrays the lives of the marginal people or their marginalized status. In particular, marginality is attributed to *Berji Kristin*'s Flower Hill folk who live in a squatter community. In my view, Flower Hill folk can be defined as marginal or not depending on the point of view.

"Marginal" in its simplest meaning refers to something which is too small to make a difference or not of central importance. A second meaning refers to someone or something that is excluded from, or existing outside, the mainstream of society, a group or a school of

thought. If we look at the different forms of the word we can have a better understanding. The noun form of the word “margin” makes sense when it is used in the expression “on the margin(s)” which means not belonging to the main or central part of a society, group or activity. Finally the verb form “to marginalize” means to make a group of people unimportant and powerless (Merriam-Webster <http://www.m-w.com>). Regarding the definitions of the “margin”, “marginal” and “marginalized”, it can be specified that a number of reviews and criticisms define Tekin’s characters, particularly the ones who live on *Berji Kristin*’s hills of garbage, as helpless people who actually stand on the periphery of the society, cast off by the dominant powers.

Marginality in *Berji Kristin* can be discussed in relation to destitution, language and “double-consciousness between deep-rooted village traditions and city values” (Özel 2003: 1). Tekin portrays the people from small villages who migrate to one of the major cities in search of a livelihood and build a squatter community on a garbage hill, in the suburbs of the city. This squatter community suffers from various problems. For instance, the demolition men regularly come and destroy their makeshift *gecekondus*; their community lacks a water supply and electricity; they have to endure serious illnesses that chemical waste from the factories near their shantytown causes. These Flower Hill folk do not return to their villages, though they have to bear various problems. Thus,

the population in the shantytown increases with an increasing number of problems and unemployment. A number of people work in nearby factories, yet after they are seriously influenced by the chemical waste they become unable to work and become unemployed. Unemployment is the reason why this squatter community makes their living by collecting garbage and selling some of the valuable stuff that they collect. Another major problem in this squatter community appears to be education. Therefore, people cannot interpret the developments going on in their environment very well because they lack education. A review by Bob Corbett supports the idea stating, "The story of Latife Tekin's fascinating and most unusual novel is simply the building of this primitive society. Since we learn that the bulk of the people who come to live on Flower Hill (as one of the main settlements is called) neither listen to news on the radio nor read newspapers (and most can't even read), what we have effectively is the story of the building of a very primitive community by people who come armed with no theory of government or community building, but evolve a community by simply dealing with the practicalities of everyday life" (<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>). Corbett's review indicates that Tekin's Flower Hill community lacks education, but at the same time they can develop a community in their own way. Sibel Erol touches upon the "naiveté" of the community and notes that it makes the reader "recognize and appreciate

the residents' efforts to understand and solve their problems. They resist, question and problematize in their own way" (Erol n.d: 10). However, regarding their overall situation, the people of Flower Hill community can be defined as marginal because they are cast off, in other words they cannot benefit from the facilities of urban life. A review published in *Ms.Arlington* indicates this point and notes that Tekin depicts "the everyday lives of marginalized people cast off by urban society" (*Ms. Arlington* 1993: 74). In this review, the emphasis is on the "marginalized" people, indicating that "marginality" is a position which is attributed to these people by a central discourse.

Another review, which appeared in *Kirkus Reviews*, stresses marginality stating, "By using traditional storytelling techniques, Tekin seamlessly marries the timelessness of marginal lives with their contemporary manifestation" (<http://www.turkuaz-guide.net/index.html?turkish-literature.htm>). These words reveal an understanding that the squatter settlement, which Tekin portrays in her novel, is perceived as a facet of marginal lives in a contemporary context. In addition to that, in a review on *Dear Shameless Death* Aamer Hussein states that Latife Tekin "has consciously crafted an idiosyncratically lyrical idiom to voice the sorrows of her own, marginalised group" (Hussein 2001). Aamer Hussein touches upon Tekin's position as an "insider" as the writer and her mission of giving voice to wordless people. In relation to the discussion

on marginality and the language that the marginal people speak, Büşra Ersanlı states “What Latife calls her personal language is the everyday spoken language of those on the margins of society” (Ersanlı 1989:11). With respect to these reviews it can be stated that critics consider Tekin’s narrative as a manifestation of marginality and Tekin, as a writer, who gives voice to these otherwise wordless people of a marginal community.

At this point the discussion can acquire another dimension, departing from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s article “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, because inquiring minds cannot help asking the question whether these wordless, marginalized people can speak without any representative who speaks on behalf of them. “Subaltern” is a term designating populations that are oppressed by cultural, economic and political forces (Spivak 1988). Spivak defines the subaltern as “the margins (one can just as well say the silent, silenced center) of the circuit marked out by this epistemic violence, men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribes, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat” (Spivak 1988: 283). Then Spivak poses her question, “On the other side of the international division of labor from socialized capital, inside and outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier text, can the subaltern speak?” (Spivak 1988: 283). Regarding Spivak’s interpretation of the margins, Tekin’s squatter community can be defined both as marginal and

subaltern in terms of their poverty, language and in-between situation. Here I am not trying to give a clear answer to Spivak's question, but rather to examine the possibilities of the subaltern finding a voice in Tekin's narrative. If the subaltern or marginalized people can speak in Tekin's narrative, then the kind of language they speak and Tekin's attempts to give voice to the subaltern are worth analyzing. It can be claimed that Tekin gives voice to these people who are positioned on the margins of society; however, defining their status as "wordless" seems to be inappropriate. It would be better to note that these people are not wordless but speak an authentic language which only makes sense in their own squatter community. In relation to that, Tekin herself notes that she transmits the language of the squatter community people as "a translator" (Tekin in Özer 2005: 102). In relation to Tekin's self-representation as a translator, Fatma Gözlükaya Tütüncü specifies, "as a political responsibility, the murmurs, Tekin mentions, representing the particularity of the life, existence and struggle of the poor need to be 'translated'" (<http://www.cultstud.org/crossroads/session/tutuncu.html>).

It was mentioned earlier in the first chapter that there is no protagonist in *Berji Kristin* but that the whole squatter community is considered as the protagonist. It may be argued that the reason why the squatter community but not the individual characters is conceived of as the protagonist is Tekin's choice of narrative which depicts the characters

with a communal perspective instead of an individual one. Tekin tends to make generalizations and her concept of destitution even reflects a communal understanding. The Flower Hill people are taken as a whole in relation to Tekin's communal understanding in *Berji Kristin*. Tekin rarely brings the individuality of her characters to the forefront. For instance, the stories of "Fidan of Many Skills" or "Lado the Gambler" reflect an individual perspective, yet even their individual stories have something to do with the rest of the Flower Hill folk.

It may be argued that the people of the squatter community experience an "in-between" (see Bhabha 1996) situation and they seem to be in search of their identities. "In-betweenness" causes confusion in their minds and damages their individuality. In my view, the lack of characters' individuality and their search for identity, reveal themselves in the way the squatter community people are named. Not a single character in the novel has a surname. The Flower Hill people are known only by their first names or mostly by their nicknames which have been given by the community. "Fidan of Many Skills" who gives the women of the community "evening classes" in the art of the bed, Nylon Mustafa who is nicknamed as "Thankless" because he did not know how to thank God, "Bayram of The Pine" the only one on Flower Hill to have a pointed pine tree before his hut, Garbage Grocer, Kara Hasan, Güllü Baba, Mother Kibriye, Şengül, Mother Fadime, Mevlut, Liverman, Kurd Cemal,

Bald Ali, Veliman, Mr. Izak, Master Gülbey, Taci Baba, Grey Hamit, Granny Dursune, The Poet Teacher, Honking Alhas, Chief Mahmut, Crazy Dursun, Zülka, Lado the Gambler, Yıldırım, Crazy Gönül, Hacı Hasan, Şini Erol, Emel the Mule, Kristin. The characters' names merely make sense in their Flower Hill community, likewise their language. Thus, it can be stated that the characters' names are clear examples that the Flower Hill people are lacking individuality and also are indicative of their marginality.

Tekin's marginalized squatter settlement in *Berji Kristin* and others similar to it around the world, most probably do not consider themselves as marginal. Therefore, it is the dominant central discourse that defines these people or communities as such and marginalizes them. According to Erol "[the] marginality of the squatter areas is an idea constructed and imposed to keep them colonized by the economic powers of the city because close to half of the population in most major cities in Turkey live in squatter settlements...In addition to constituting a large percentage of city populations, residents of squatter settlements contribute to the productivity and functioning of the city" (Erol n.d: 12). Therefore, these people do not seem to be marginal in the true meaning of the word because "they are not too small to make any difference". However, dominant powers exclude them from the mainstream of the society and underestimate their contribution to the functioning of the city. Thus,

defining these people as “marginal” and treating them as objects cast off by the central discourse make it impossible to appreciate the central role these people play in production. Contrary to the central discourse, Tekin’s narrative resists the center’s modernizing and dominating discourse and positions its characters in the centre. What Sibel Erol notes in relation to this point is worthy of attention:

The realist social novel, for example, uses the squatter settlement as a locus of ignorance and the backwardness, locked in a past that it cannot get out of unless saved by one kind of intellectual or the other. In this type of depiction, the squatter settlement becomes the justification of an emancipatory metanarrative and of the intervention of the intellectual and his ideology. Latife Tekin dispenses with an ideological argument by avoiding a paradigmatic definition that sets the squatter settlement as the opposite of the city. Tekin’s exclusive emphasis on the squatter settlement validates it as a place worthy of attention without the need of legitimating comparison to the city. (Erol, n.d: 11)

It was mentioned before that Latife Tekin writes as an insider and that she considers herself as a member of the marginalized group of people that she depicts in her novels. Tekin brings her characters from the periphery to the center and she turns the squatter settlement into a center in its own right. Sibel Erol also affirms this viewpoint stating “It is on the basis of her life experience, positioning herself within it, that Tekin interjects into Turkish fiction a new description of the squatter settlement.” (Erol, n.d: 8). Tekin does not portray the Flower Hill community as a disadvantaged other of the urban society (Erol n.d: 11), but positions

them in the center of the world because their struggle takes place within the boundaries of their own community and they do not adopt an urban outlook. In brief, they do not cross the lines of Flower Hill. Moreover, these marginal people inevitably become a significant component of the culture and society with their unusual customs and authentic language. As Saliha Paker puts it, Tekin depicts “the testimony of the older generation of squatters who witnessed the genesis of a subculture of enormous social significance despite its marginal situation” (Paker 1993: 13). Although these people are seen and defined as marginal by a central discourse Tekin places them in the center and emphasizes their social significance as a culture in its own right. With Erol’s view, John Berger in his preface to *Berji Kristin* emphasizes the same point, “[Latife Tekin] showed that it was possible, possible for any reader anywhere in the world, to at last imagine the center of the world as shanty-town” (Berger 1993: 6-7). And finally what Saliha Paker notes, puts Tekin’s case clearly regarding marginality, “The squatter settlement, which had so far existed in Turkish fiction as the periphery whose inhabitants were taken into account in terms of the social class they represented, became in *Berji Kristin* a world of its own” (Paker 1993: 13).

4.3.2. Timelessness

In the first chapter, it was stated that Latife Tekin does not employ the characteristics of the conventional novel. In particular, there exists no clear reference to time both in *Berji Kristin* and *Dear Shameless Death*; the events take place in a timeless realm and with a non-sequential order. Tekin's characters, particularly in *Berji Kristin*, seem to be isolated from the rest of the world, struggling for a life of their own within the realm of their squatter community. It appears that Tekin purposely hides all reference to time because she wants to emphasize the timelessness the squatter community experienced.

First of all, "to experience timelessness, you need to focus intently on the moment at hand. You cannot allow your mind to wander over events of the past or wallow in deep concern over the future. You must be in the present moment, fully alert, and clear-headed. In short, you must be totally involved in 'now' (<http://www.awakening-intuition.com/CreatingTimelessness.html>). Timelessness is the very situation that Tekin's squatter community experienced. It may be argued that those people have neither a past nor a future because their rural past seems to be in conflict with their urban future; they are neither rural nor urban. Due to their in-betweenness they have to struggle merely for the present. In the timeless nature of the novel, the characters relocate their identities

freed from their past connections or future plans. That is why Tekin doesn't inform the reader about time. For instance, we have no idea how many years the development of Flower Hill takes. Bob Corbett states that "[Tekin] seems to want to ignore or even make a statement that the temporal order of development is totally unimportant" (<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>). According to Corbett Tekin's preference for emphasizing the situation, which the squatter settlement people experienced, is not temporary but rather a permanent one. As a result of this permanent situation, timelessness becomes an important feature of Tekin's narrative.

A number of reviews can be found which touch upon the concept of timelessness in Tekin's novels. For instance, it is specified in a review on *Berji Kristin*, which appeared in *Kirkus Reviews* that "by using traditional storytelling techniques, Tekin seamlessly marries the timelessness of marginal lives with their contemporary manifestation" (<http://www.turkuaz-guide.net/index.html?turkish-literature.htm>). Another review expresses that "[In *Berji Kristin*] no specific dates or places (other than the hills and their immediate vicinity) are mentioned, but the setting and pace of the novel roughly coincide with that of the massive growth of shantytowns and factories on Istanbul's outskirts during the 1970s" (<http://fetchbook.info/search0714530115/tabreviews.html>). In addition to

these reviews, what Bob Corbett expresses in relation to timelessness seems to be interesting:

There is the curious narrative choice that all references to weather seem to be of winter and rather bitter winter at that – snow, very cold and such. At first I thought the entire book was taking place in the first winter of settlement, sort of thinking that the initial squatters might have come to the dump in autumn and then all the action taking place in the first winter. But it becomes obvious this is not the case and that a number of years are involved in the story. (<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>)

The above reviews reveal that Tekin deliberately conceal references to time and highlight a timeless realm in her novels. As the above reviews indicate, timelessness seems to be one of the significant aspects of Tekin's narrative which became a centre of attention in the target culture(s).

4.3.3. Cross-culturality

The notion of cross-culturality can also be observed in the target culture(s) reception of Latife Tekin's works as a point of emphasis. What makes it possible for Tekin's works to be received as cross-cultural can be her preference for hiding all references to space in particular. As was mentioned earlier, space and time remain indefinite in Tekin's narrative. Although it can be understood that the setting of the novel is İstanbul, the

narrative makes the reader feel that the events might take place in any other city of the world.

Ken Kalfus, in his review on *Berji Kristin*, points out the novel indicates the social conflicts, inequality of income and differences between social classes. He notes, "First published in İstanbul in 1984, *Berji Kristin* poses an urgent warning of social conflict to the Turkish republic and to İstanbul's foreign sister cities, similarly riven by the vast differences between rich and poor" (Kalfus 1993: 18). Kalfus' perspective supports the idea that *Berji Kristin* has a cross-cultural aspect. Ken Kalfus writes, "Latife Tekin's hills of garbage lie outside an unnamed city. It could be İstanbul - but it might just as easily have been Mexico City, Cairo or any other explosively growing urban center that has spawned a squatters' community on its grim, polluted periphery" (ibid.). Although the novel is received in a cross-cultural frame, it is not described as universal because the cities, which Ken Kalfus specifies as the counterparts of İstanbul, are "Mexico City" and "Cairo". As a matter of fact Kalfus makes a reasonable categorization, because Mexico and Egypt are considered as developing countries like Turkey; therefore Mexico City and Cairo can be specified as the counterparts of İstanbul in terms of their rate of development. It is known that developed and underdeveloped countries exist in the world. Underdeveloped countries have two main categories: developing countries and "Third World" countries. It may be controversial

to categorize Mexico City, Cairo and Istanbul as either “Third World” cities or developing cities. Regarding Kalfus’ perspective, can we consider *Berji Kristin* a “Third World” novel, or is the theme of the novel at least an issue for “Third World” countries?

David Kemp in his review on *Berji Kristin* strengthens the understanding that the theme depicted in *Berji Kristin* is an issue for Third World countries. Kemp notes that Tekin represents a new direction in Turkey itself and “has succeeded in forging a new style that marks her as a truly original voice from the other Turkey, the part that the glossy holiday brochures never reach and she deploys her new ‘language of deprivation’ to deliver a savage parable of capitalism in the “Third World” that is also a devastating critique” (Kemp 1993). Kemp’s interpretation of Tekin’s language as a critique of capitalism in the “Third World” puts forth a significant point of view for consideration. As was mentioned above, Ken Kalfus also emphasizes the value of the novel’s social references. On the one hand, I agree that the points stated by the critics reveal *Berji Kristin*’s cross-cultural perspective; but on the other hand I cannot help asking why the picture depicted in *Berji Kristin* shouldn’t be considered universal. If we free our minds and go beyond the so-called boundaries of the “Third World”, won’t we find social conflicts, income inequalities, differences between social classes, poverty, or to state it simply traces of capitalism? Not only the “Third World”, but the whole world is affected by

capitalism: even the countries that govern the capital power suffer from the negative influences of capitalism beneath the surface. It is not that difficult to find a squatter settlement in a developed country and it cannot be said that there is no poverty or destitution in developed countries. There are degrees of poverty and destitution. In my opinion destitution, which can be considered one of the main themes of Tekin's literary works, is a universal issue. David Kemp, in the last paragraph of his review, mentions the universality of the issue. He indicates the signs of destitution on Scotland:

For the first time, over the past few years, I have seen teenagers begging in Scottish stations and the shaming phrase 'cardboard city' has now entered our own language. Will single mothers and their families soon join mental patients (expelled from mental hospitals for 'care in the community') on our streets? What has been happening to our own army of dossers and bag ladies over the past few nights with Scotland shrouded in snow and ice? We, too, like it or not, are living on Flower Hill (Kemp 1993).

Kemp's words support the idea that the picture depicted in *Berji Kristin* can fairly be considered a universal one; Tekin's Flower Hill can be found anywhere in the world.

Finally, as regards to the cross-cultural emphasis on Tekin's narrative Leslie Moushey notes that Tekin's *Berji Kristin* makes a turning point in cross-cultural understanding (Moushey 1994: 49). In her review on the Moslem women writers, Moushey indicates that Tekin, along with other writers, opens a gateway for a better understanding of Moslem

cultures for Americans” (Moushey 1994: 49). Thus, Tekin’s narrative is perceived as serving the cause of cross-cultural understanding.

4.3.4. Magical Realism

Fantasy reveals itself as one of the significant elements of Latife Tekin’s narrative. As Keith Hitchins notes, “[Latife Tekin] uses fantasy and the supernatural on a grand scale to convey ideas and delineate character, means that she has surely adapted from Turkish fairy stories and folklore and even from the medieval heroic epics. Many pages call to mind a surrealist painting (Hitchins 2001: 234). Tekin makes use of fantasy as a narrative technique and breaks the conventions of the Turkish novel by interweaving her narrative which is composed of fantasy, magic and folklore. Another review expresses the significance of fantasy Tekin employs in her novels, “[Tekin] uses fantasy as a means of reconstructing individual experience in a way that is both authentic and breath-takingly poetic” (<http://fetchbook.info/search/0714530549/tabreviews.html>).

In practice what Tekin employs as a narrative technique in her novels is magical realism. An explanation about magical realism can clarify the point and help us understand the differences between fantasy and magical realism:

A literary mode rather than a distinguishable genre, magical realism aims to seize the paradox of the union of

opposites. For instance, it challenges polar opposites like life and death and the pre-colonial past versus the post-industrial present. Magical realism is characterized by two conflicting perspectives, one based on a rational view of reality and the other on the acceptance of the supernatural as prosaic reality. Magical realism differs from pure fantasy primarily because it is set in a normal, modern world with authentic descriptions of humans and society. According to Angel Flores, magical realism involves the fusion of the real and the fantastic, or as he claims, "an amalgamation of realism and fantasy". (Moore [http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Magical Realism.html](http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Magical%20Realism.html))

Tekin's novels do not take place in a non-existent, imaginary space; neither do any of her characters live among imaginary creatures. Her novels take place in our world and her characters face the harsh difficulties of the life itself. Therefore, Tekin's novels do not appear to be remote from reality, rather they are surrounded by reality but they benefit from magic or fantasy to face the reality. What Bob Corbett notes in relation to fantasy employed in Tekin's narrative is that Tekin's fantasy is the reality itself, "The people do not think in terms of modern western notions of knowledge. Rather, they tend to understand all events in spiritual or what we would call superstitious, religious or occult explanations. When anything new arises and every single day entire new problems and worlds of "civilization building" are being encountered, the explanations tend to be fantastical with appeals to transcendental sources and interventions. (<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/personal/reading/tekin-garbage.html>).

Tekin's first novel *Dear Shameless Death* seems to be her most important work in which readers can observe the use of magical realism. According to Sema Aslan "*Dear Shameless Death* is a novel which uses the transition from the real to fantasy frequently, without the intervention of the narrator to distinguish the real from fantasy" (Aslan 2002: 1). The leading figures in the novel are Dirmit and her mother Atiye. Atiye seems to represent the rural aspect of the novel because she remains attached to the traditions of the village and superstitious elements. She seems to split her life into two: one is the real world she lives in and the other is the unseen world of spirits. Atiye is a religious woman but she is rational at the same time, thus she never accepts before questioning. For instance, she quarrels with the angel of death many times, she does not surrender easily. Dirmit seems to represent the urban aspect of the novel. According to Keith Hitchins, "Dirmit represents change, the transition from the old to the new" (Hitchins 2001: 234). Dirmit is different from the other members of the family; she adjusts to the city conditions best, she improves her writing skills and starts to write poetry. However, she is surrounded by superstitious elements as well. She has a very creative imagination; she talks to the water-well and the birdie-bird plant, she believes in djinns and she lives with them. The most striking point is that Dirmit considers the talking water-well and the birdie-bird plant and the djinns are parts of reality. Atiye represents the rural and old and Dirmit the

modern, urban and new. However both are surrounded by superstitious elements. At this point, Tekin's skillfull use of magical realism comes to forefront.

When *Dear Shameless Death* first appeared on the Turkish literary scene in 1983, it "caused a sensation" as Hitchins has noted (ibid.) and was criticized from many perspectives. A review that appeared in *The Economist* describes the reception of the novel in Turkey and hints at the novel's target culture(s) reception, "Critics, dazzled by the book's originality and its interweaving of songs and rhymes and folk stories, spoke of the arrival of magic realism in Turkish fiction. If so, it is an everyday magic. For Ms Tekin, the jinns – sprites which take human or animal form – are as real as the rocks and trees and people of her village" (*The Economist* 2001: 80).

One of the significant criticisms *Dear Shameless Death* received in the source culture was its similarity to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Turkish critics discussed the association between the narrative style Tekin employed in her first novel and style of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Belge 1984a, 1984b, Kutlar 1984a, Moran 2001). There was the tendency to question the originality of the novel, comparing it with Marquez's work. In relation to this point, Latife Tekin herself stated that Marquez's style had helped her to find a way for telling her own story (Tekin 1984a: 6). Moreover, Güneli Gün's statement

affirms Tekin's explanation, "[Tekin's] book *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (Dear Shameless Death) was inspired by a literary comet from the outside: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the Colombian writer who discovered a way to speak of the unspoken which we have come to call Magical Realism. Tekin was so gripped by the first nine pages of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that she seems to have written her book in a fever which broke only when she was through writing" (Gün 1996: 579). It can be noted that a few critics highlighted the differences between the magical realism employed by Marquez and Tekin. However, what remained from these discussions was the similarity between the two novels; *Dear Shameless Death* and *A Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Eighteen years later, in 2001 *Dear Shameless Death* appeared on the Anglophone literary scene. It can be noted that the novel's target culture(s) reception also emphasizes fantasy and magical realism as significant elements of Tekin's narrative. The striking point is that the Anglophone critics also mention the similarity between the style of Tekin and Marquez. As Amer Hussein states:

When *Dear Shameless Death* first appeared in Turkish, Gabriel Garcia Marquez was the presiding genius of Third World literature. Latife Tekin, in her mid-twenties when she wrote her first novel, probably found the graces and excesses of Marquez-inspired realism ideally suited to her theme and terrain. Her fictional tapestries are steeped in the brightest colours of the primitive picturesque. Fantasy – talking plants, naked witches, shape-shifting jinns –

presides over the real, at least in the opening chapters. We only gradually identify the characters of her novel's central family as presences in our time, our world. (Hussein 2001)

Aamer Hussein describes the influence of fantastic figures in Tekin's novel and mentions that Tekin might have been inspired by the style of Marquez. However, Hussein's perspective seems to be slightly different from most of the criticisms which appeared in the source culture. Most Turkish critics who had related magical realism to the inspiration from Marquez, in general questioned the originality of Tekin's novel, but Hussein who observes that "Latife Tekin, probably found the graces and excesses of Marquez-inspired realism ideally suited to her theme and terrain" (Hussein 2001) does not question the originality of Tekin's novel. On the contrary, he praises Tekin's ability to adapt Marquez' "graces and excesses" to her original theme and narrative.

Marquez' influence is not attributed only to *Dear Shameless Death* in the target culture(s). David Kemp in his review on *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* states that "This profoundly moving and magical allegorical novel, only comparable, in my experience, with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (though, inevitably falling short of that towering masterpiece) tells the story of Flower Hill, a pitiful squatter settlement cobbled together from the plastic detritus of consumerism on a garbage dump on the outskirts of an unnamed Turkish city, almost certainly Istanbul" (Kemp 1993). Accordingly, it can be noted

that both of the novels, in general, received constructive criticisms as regards the inspiration from Marquez. However, there also exists a negative critical review regarding Tekin's use of magical realism. Lisa Allardice expresses that "Despite glimpses of Istanbul's turbulent political climate in the 1970s, Tekin's magic realism lacks the historical awareness of those writers, such as Grass, Marquez and Rushdie, who popularized a genre that increasingly seems not so much magical as mechanical and over-familiar" (Allardice 2001). It seems that Allardice criticizes both the later position of magical realism as a genre and Tekin's shortcomings in dealing with it as a narrative technique.

Consequently, I can note that Tekin's magical realism received constructive criticisms and is praised in the target culture(s). Critics from the target culture(s) also emphasize the influence of Marquez on Tekin's narrative. Although, Tekin's fantasy is composed of cultural, traditional, folkloric and even Islamic elements which may seem fairly strange and alien, her way of employing magical realism and her narrative as a whole have generally been reviewed favorably in the target culture(s). In relation to this what Saliha Paker states seems to be important, "Every culture has its mysteries, ones that are elusive, sometimes impossible to define to outsiders. However, a work of fiction can, in an unexpectedly imaginative manner, find its way into a culture, into indigenous resources and draw readers into its own universe where mysteries are part of life,

no matter how different or alien that culture may be” (Paker 2001:7). Here Paker is referring to the Turkish rural culture as opposed to the urban culture of the educated Turk. But it may be said that the success of a translation can also help a work of fiction find its way into an even more “foreign” culture by transmitting the mysteries and magic of a truly indigenous one.

4.3.5. The feminist perspective

The feminist perspective can be seen in the target culture(s) reception of Latife Tekin’s *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Dear Shameless Death*. The situation seems to be interesting because neither the writer herself, nor the Turkish critics and reviewers explicitly discussed the feminist perspective of the novels. However, *Berji Kristin* and, particularly, *Dear Shameless Death* were appraised in the target culture(s) in terms of their feminist perspective. Saliha Paker’s insightful introduction to *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* appears to be illuminating as regards the feminist perspective of Tekin’s narrative:

[The world in *Berji Kristin*] is essentially a man’s world, but women appear in it as strangely powerful figures, despite their subordination. Their world in Tekin’s fiction maintains a distinctive interaction with its male counterpart and womanhood is conceived as a secret society resisting and, at times, subverting oppressive forces. However, like the majority of Turkish woman writers, Tekin makes no claim to feminism in the Western sense, which is regarded

as a separating and restricting factor for a fiction writer. What lies behind this stance are the specific conditions created by a secularist ideology of a republican state (which tends to shun any form of separation or segregation), the desire for total social involvement and the need to address a wide readership? It is interesting, for instance, that in *Berji Kristin*, the rise and decline of the community on the garbage hills is symbolized by the female attributions in the title: 'Berji' for innocence and 'Kristin' for prostitution. (Paker 1993: 13-14)

Paker notes that Tekin makes no claim to "feminism in the Western sense" and she reasons that the "conditions created by a secularist ideology, the desire for total social involvement and the need to address a wide readership" lie behind Tekin's stance (ibid.). It was Paker's introduction which reflects Tekin's feminist perspective and understanding first. At this point, it would be apt to look at the publishers' approach to the feminist perspective in Tekin's novels. Tekin's publishers (Marion Boyars), present the novel as follows on their web site:

Concentrating on a daughter's struggle against her overbearing mother set against the pressures of a rapidly changing society, *Dear Shameless Death* is a fantastic, hallucinatory novel, with strong feminist insights about what it means to be a woman growing up in Turkey today (<http://www.marionboyars.co.uk/Specific%20title%20pages/shame.html>).

The publishers' comment basically highlights the difficulties of being a woman in Turkey; thus, focusing on the feminist slant of the novel. Correspondingly, a critic Keith Hitchins posits that in *Dear Shameless Death* the leading figures are Dirmit and Atiye and states, "in

a sense, Atiye is the heroine, because the action revolves around her and she is the link connecting all the other characters” (Hitchins 2001:234). As mentioned earlier, Atiye represents the rural and Dirmit the urban aspects of the novel. Therefore, the novel seems to revolve around these two strong female figures. *Dear Shameless Death* touches upon the situation of women who are suppressed by men, yet at the same time can manage to remain powerful. Hitchins states that the two leading female characters remain powerful throughout the novel and “in contrast to these two strong women, the male figures, whom tradition has made dominant, are ineffectual and unable to adjust to city life and are thus marginalized” (ibid.). Saniye Çancı similar to Hitchins’ viewpoint claims that the women characters in *Dear Shameless Death* find a way to resist the male dominance and to express themselves in a patriarchal society through sewing clothes, weaving carpets and writing poems (Çancı 2003).

Some of the reader comments available on the Internet also indicate that *Dear Shameless Death* has a feminist perspective. One of the comments states “*Dear Shameless Death* offers rich insights into female identity, using fantasy as a means of reconstructing individual experience in a way that is both authentic and breath-takingly poetic” (<http://fetchbook.info/search0714530549/tabreviews.html>). The above mentioned comments indicate the target culture(s) reception of Tekin’s

literary works highlights the feminist insight of the novels which until recently was largely ignored in the source culture.

Feminism can be considered a subject which some differences between the source and target culture(s) receptions of Tekin's literary works came to the forefront. Tekin has never been defined as a feminist writer in the source culture, yet there exist some references to her divergent approach to women, knowledge and identity (Atasü 1996, Güllü 2002, Gün 1986, Irzık 2004, Paker 1991, Savaşır 1987, Sezer 1995). It seems that Tekin made her first statements about feminism in an interview with İskender Savaşır that was published in *Zemin* in 1987. Tekin, in the interview, states "she feels herself remote to an integral type of feminism which overlooks fragmentation" (Tekin 1987: 44) [Feminizm de yekpareleştiği, bölünmüşlüklere tepeden baktığı sürece bana uzak geliyor]. Regarding Tekin's expressions in the interview it can be inferred that she rejects one-type of the feminist perspective. She defends the idea that women in Turkey, or perhaps women in her novels, may not act in the frame of a Western feminist perspective; however, it cannot be perceived that they do not resist the dominant patriarchal system. Tekin states that "women destroy the men's world from the inside with their secret signs and murmurs" (Tekin 1987: 45) [...kadınlar erkekler dünyasını gizli işaretlerle, fısıltılarla içten oy[arlar]]. Saliha Paker in her article "Unmuffled Voices" refers to the interview and notes that in the

interview with İskender Savaşır “Tekin questions the relevance of Western feminism for Turkish society and refers to an indigenous and rather mysterious ‘knowledge’ of womanhood that is now ‘lost’ and must be retrieved” (Paker 1991: 290). It appears that what Paker quotes from *Zemin* reveals Tekin’s overall perspective about feminism, “I think women create something like an illicit world or an illicit language; something that is secret but can be shared. Opening doors, penetrating into the secret world of women and learning their idioms seem to me as important as an organized struggle. Rather, I can no longer imagine a women’s struggle without that, as learning this medium will help us to understand their particular ways and methods of resistance” (Paker 1991: 292). In relation to these viewpoints, Gül Güllü also expresses that the women in Tekin’s novels are the characters who both suffer and resist at the same time (Güllü 2002: 38). [Latife Tekin’in romanlarında kadın kahramanlar cefa çeken insanlardır...Kadın kahraman kendisi için uygun görülen cefalı rolleri oynar. Aynı zamanda bu zorlayıcı rollerin oynandığı çevreye direnir].

Feminism has not been at the center of discussions about Tekin’s narrative since her literary début was first published, yet from time to time some literary professionals dealt with the subject in their reviews or criticisms. For instance, Sennur Sezer in her article “*Sevgili Arsız*

Ölüm'den Aşk İşaretleri'ne Latife Tekin'in Anlatısının Dil ve Çevresi"

specifies:

It might be specified that the women writers try to go beyond the overall community perspective towards the women, with an outstanding language and a peculiar style. I think, Latife Tekin with her narrative, remains one of the prosecutors of this contemporary tradition, and acquires a different position from the other women writers with the women that she depicts in her novels. (Sezer 1995: 47)

[Denebilir ki, kadın yazarlar, toplumun kadınlara bakış açısının genel geçer kurallarını, yeni bir özel dil ve kendine özgü anlatımla aşmaya çalışmaktadır. Bence, Latife Tekin, anlatılarında, bu çağdaş geleneğin sürdürümcülerindendir. Anlatmayı seçtiği toplum katmanlarının kadınlarıyla, önceki kadın yazarların tiplerinden ayrılmaktadır]

In relation to Sezer's statement what Erendiz Atasü notes seems to be relevant, "In the novels which depict village life, the images of young women do not 'exist/live/survive' they just remain as the figures who support the development of the plot and/or as the objects and admirers of the men's sexuality and this depiction is not coincidental" (Atasü 1996: 12) [Köy yaşamını konu alan romanlarda genç kadın imgelerinin 'yaşayamaması', yalnızca konunun gelişmesine yarayan ve/veya erkeklerin cinsel isteğinin nesnesi veya hayranı olarak kalan boyutsuz figürlere indirgenmesi herhalde rastlantı değildir]. However, "Tekin's women are lively and flirtatious, and they do not admire the men's sexuality, on the contrary they criticize it. They share a sub-culture that none of the men around them are aware of" (Atasü 1996: 12) [Latife Tekin'in kaleminin çizdiği kadınlarsa yaşamla kıpır kıpırdır. Bu kadınlar

erkeğin cinselliğine hayranlık beslemek şöyle dursun, çoğu kez eleştirel gözle yaklaşırlar! Kocalarının kardeşlerinin, oğullarının burnunun dibinde, erkeklerin ruhunun bile duymadığı bir alt kültürü paylaşırlar birbirleriyle!]. Atasü posits that Tekin's woman characters retain a distinguished position by creating a world of their own and challenging the mainstream features attributed to the women by the society or the Turkish novel tradition. It might be argued that Saliha Paker's words seem to complement Atasü's viewpoint. As for Paker "[Tekin's] works depict tough conditions of life in which there is a constant swing between submission and resistance in areas ranging from the traditional to the contemporary, from the political to the sexual" (Paker 1991: 290). Following these words Paker touches upon the women of *Berji Kristin's* Flower Hill "who take night lessons from a woman of many wiles to achieve sexual satisfaction just like their husbands" (Paker 1991: 290), this is as an example, in my view, of the women's resistance and endeavor to discover their own sexuality instead of being an admirer of their men's sexuality.

Not until 2004 was the feminist perspective of Tekin's narrative undertaken as a subject of an in depth analysis. In 2004, Sibel Irzık's article "Latife Tekin'de Beden ve Yazı" surveys Tekin's feminism and analyzes the women characters of Tekin; Dirmiş in *Dear Shameless Death*, Cihan in *Signs of Love*, and Gülfidan/Sekreter Rüzgar in *Night Lessons*. Irzık posits that the control mechanism on Dirmiş's body and her

notebook, in which she writes down her poetry, seem to parallel one another and indicates a connection between writing and reprobation (Irzık 2004: 204). She speculates “Tekin follows a familiar path, in that intending to become a writer is an inappropriate occupation for a woman” (ibid.) [Artık iyi tanıdığımız bir izlek bu. Bir kadının yazarlığa ‘soyunması’ uygunsuzdur]. Gülfidan/Sekreter Rüzgar in *Night Lessons* seems to be a character that Tekin depicted with clear womanly sensitivity. Irzık, in general, sheds light on the feminist understanding of Tekin’s novels concluding that Tekin’s narrative with its approach to Dirmit, Gülfidan and other women characters has been designated as “women’s writing” [kadın yazısı] by a number of critics and contemporary women writers. This is due to the style, which Tekin employs, her positioning of women at the center of the writing, and the search for integrity of body, sexuality and language (Irzık 2004: 221-222).

Regarding these viewpoints it can be noted that Tekin’s narrative was considered a “women’s writing” (Irzık 2004: 221) by some of the literary professionals in the source culture. However, the literary professionals on the Turkish literary scene have never attributed a definite feminist image to Tekin. Moreover, Tekin herself has never identified herself as a feminist writer.

On the other hand, in the target culture(s) the situation seems to be quite different from that in the source culture. There exist a number of

reviews which appeared in the target culture(s) that refer to the feminist aspects of Tekin's narrative. However, one of the reviewers, remaining outside the general trend, explicitly identifies Tekin as a feminist writer. Allardice asserts, "Latife Tekin, a Turkish feminist, also writes for the sisterhood in her fantastical, largely autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death* which charmingly tells of a little Turkish girl's journey to independence through poetry and education" (Allardice 2001), Allardice, in a similar manner to Keith Hitchins focuses on the feminist references in *Dear Shameless Death*. However, she goes one step further and defines Tekin as a feminist writer.

Here, what seems to be striking is that although Tekin's narrative has a feminist aspect, the topic was only raised and started to be analyzed and discussed years after her first appearance on the Turkish literary scene. Besides, *Dear Shameless Death* can be considered to have clear feminist references, at least in the opinion of the target culture(s). It is obvious that the number of reviews and criticisms on Tekin published in the source culture is far more than the ones published in the target culture(s). However, few of them dealt with Tekin's feminist perspective.

It might be argued that feminist critics share an awareness of literature as an ideological force in culture. As Morag Shiach expresses, "Feminist theories and forms of activism have long been addressing the

ways in which culture constructs or reinforces gender hierarchies. In many disciplinary and political spaces, feminism has concerned itself with forms of language, with the power of images, with the pleasures and perils of cultural identifications” (Shiach 1999: 3). For the above-mentioned reasons, Tekin’s novels with their feminist insights can be considered to exert an “ideological force” directly or indirectly, by drawing attention to “gender hierarchies” and struggles in a man’s world.

4.4. Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I discussed the dynamics, which have been influential in shaping the authorial image of Latife Tekin both in the source and target culture(s). The analysis revealed that the authorial image determined for Tekin in the source culture, basically focuses on her figure as a leftist woman writer of poverty and deprivation. It would be apt to conclude that Tekin’s image in the source culture is associated closely with her own life experiences with regard to destitution. On the other hand, Tekin’s authorial image shaped within the target culture(s) seems to be freed from her personal background when compared to the source culture image. It might be stated that the target culture(s) image of the writer was built mainly on her literary significance as a writer in the source culture literary system. Moreover, the target culture(s) image of Tekin, for the

most part highlights the originality and authenticity of her narrative and the themes of her novels. The theme of destitution has also been associated with Tekin's authorial image in the target culture(s)' similar to the source culture. In my view Güneli Gün's statements about Tekin, summarizes the target culture(s)' image of the author. Gün states that Tekin is a writer "who has given the underprivileged masses a voice that can be heard by the world of literature" (Gün 1993:886).

Chapter 4 also highlighted some specific aspects attributed to Tekin's narrative such as (1) marginality (2) timelessness (3) cross-culturality (4) magical realism and (5) the feminist perspective which have been influential in the reception of Tekin's narrative and in the construction of her image in the target culture(s).

Conclusions

This thesis aimed to analyze the reception of Latife Tekin's literary works and her authorial image shaped within the source and the target culture(s). I discussed the authorial image of Tekin both within the source and the target culture(s) and presented a comparative account of the reception of two of her novels: *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (*Dear Shameless Death*) and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*). I argued that the authorial image, which is shaped within the source culture, might to a certain extent, be influential in the reception of the author's works in the target culture(s). I also claimed that the reception of the author's works and her/his authorial image in the target culture(s) in turn might have a transforming effect on the reception of the particular author's works in the source culture. Therefore, it can be stated that this study aimed to discuss the dual interaction between the reception of Tekin's works and her authorial image in the source and target culture(s). While putting forward my argument I basically used the concept of "rewriting" proposed by André Lefevere (1992: 2). Lefevere's concept provided insight to examine the part which reviewers, critics and extratextual materials play in the reception and image-shaping processes.

In this study, Chapter 1 ("Theoretical Framework and Methodology") introduced the theoretical and methodological framework and basically discussed the role of the translation as a medium of travel.

Translation is important in the scope of this study because it is the instrument which made Tekin's literature travel around the world. Therefore, it would be apt to state that translation – as rewriting – constituted the most crucial part of the reception processes. Chapter 2 ("Reception of Latife Tekin's Literary Works in the Source Culture") presented an overview of Tekin's literary works and emphasized the traits attributed to the writer by Turkish literary critics. Chapter 2 revealed that Tekin has made considerable contributions to the development of Turkish fiction since the 1980s with her original narrative style. Chapter 2 also displayed that Tekin's first five novels, in particular, had significant influence on the reception of her works in the source culture. The source culture reception of Tekin's literary works mainly focused on destitution and deprivation, Tekin has been considered "a revolutionary voice" (Erol n.d: 7) for destitute people.

Chapter 3 ("Reception of Latife Tekin's Literary Works in the Target Culture(s)") surveyed how Tekin's literary works were received in the target culture(s), particularly in the Anglophone literary world. The target culture(s) reception of Tekin's literary works, basically focused on the literary value of her novels, her language and narrative, the originality of the themes of her novels, the subject of destitution she depicts in her novels, and the similarity of her narrative to some other authors of world-wide prominence such as Samuel Beckett, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Toni

Morrison, and James Joyce. Chapter 3 revealed that the target culture reception of Tekin's works has had traces of the source culture reception, and the introductions written by Saliha Paker – one of the translators – have become one of the main resources as regards to Tekin for the literary professionals in the target culture(s).

Chapter 4 ("The Authorial Image of Latife Tekin Shaped within the Source and Target Culture(s)") focused on the authorial image of Tekin which has been shaped in the source and target culture(s) in relation to the reception of her literary works. Chapter 4 concluded that Tekin's authorial image in the source culture foregrounded her stance as a leftist woman writer of poverty and deprivation. Tekin's image in the source culture has been associated closely with her own life experiences as a person who experienced poverty at first-hand. On the other hand, Tekin's authorial image shaped within the target culture(s) seemed to be freed from her personal background when compared to the source culture image. However, the target culture(s)' image of Tekin has had traces of the source culture: her target culture(s)' image was constructed with regard to her literary significance as a writer in the source culture. Furthermore, the originality and authenticity of Tekin's narrative and the theme of destitution, in particular, have been emphasized in relation to Tekin's authorial image in the target culture(s).

This study revealed that there exist differences and similarities between the source and target culture(s) receptions of Tekin's literary works. Moreover, the authorial image of the writer tends to differ within the source and target culture(s). One of the reasons for the difference in the source and target reception of Tekin's literary works can be specified as the cultural, sociological, ideological and literary differences between the general tendencies of the particular cultures. It might be noted in Lefevere's terms that the differences in the "constraints of poetological and ideological currents" (Lefevere 1992: 14). Another difference, I concluded, stems from the fact that the literary professionals within the culture which the writer belongs to are concerned not only with the literary career, but also personal background and the ongoing life style of the writer. In my view, the survey I have conducted on the reception of Tekin's literary works has revealed that literary professionals from the source culture tend, at times, to deal with the life story and personal background of Tekin even more than her literary works. Therefore, it can be expressed that the source culture reception of Tekin's literary works is more closely associated with her personal background than the target culture(s) reception.

Similarities between the receptions within the two different cultures, on the other hand, take root from the interaction between the cultures. It is evident that there exists a considerable and growing

interaction between the cultures. Translation is a significant medium which ensures cultural interaction on several levels. As regards to this viewpoint, I underline that there exists an observable interplay between the source and target receptions of Tekin's literary works. When Tekin's first novel was published in the source culture, the novel received several responses from literary professionals and then an authorial image started to be constructed. Each subsequent novel that was published enlarged and transformed both the reception and the image of the writer; thus, appended new aspects to the overall reception. It would be apt to state that the decision to translate the novel into English or any other language is a result of the particular reception of the original work in the source culture. As Saliha Paker notes, "The dynamics in the Anglophone and/or Turkish culture, or the interaction between Anglophone and other target culture(s) such as French and German, that prompted the translation/s; the central or marginal position of the original work/s in the source culture" (Paker 2000: 619) are the reasons which start the translation processes. Therefore, it might be expressed that; in general a particular reception – source culture reception – of a literary work can be accepted as the force behind the translation. If the translated text itself is considered to be a reflection of the reception, then it would not be wrong to emphasize the significance of an interaction between the source and target culture(s).

In Tekin's case, the similarities between the source and target culture(s) reception revolve around Tekin's literary achievement with her literary début and her subsequent novels in the Turkish literary environment and in the target culture(s) in which her works were translated. Most of the literary professionals agree with the idea that Tekin has challenged the conventions of the Turkish novel and became a literary issue (Paker 1991: 290, Kemp 1993, Gün 1993: 886, Buckley 1993, Belge 1984a: 27, Kutlar 1984a: 26, Parla 2003: 535). Another point in terms of similarity can be stated as the new "metaphorical", "lyrical" (Barchard 1993: 18, Bedford 1993, Paker 1991: 292, Steinberg 1992: 490) and "magical", "allegorical" (Kemp 1993) language which Tekin employs in her narrative.

Magical realism, on the other hand, revealed itself as an important aspect of Tekin's narrative which the views of almost every literary professional showing interest in Tekin's narrative, from the source and target culture(s) are concurrent with one another. It can be stated that almost every reviewer and critic dealt with Tekin's magical realism and fantasy (Allardice 2001, Aslan 2001, Atasü 1996, Belge 1984a, *The Economist* 2001, Gürbilek 1999, Hitchins 2001, Hussein 2001, Kalfus 1993, Kemp 1993, Kutlar 1984a, Öktemgil-Turgut 2003). This study

revealed that the criticisms that Tekin received from the source and target culture(s) in terms of magical realism seem to be similar and display only slight differences.

Apart from the similarities, differences between the source and target culture(s) reception of Tekin's literary works were found in relation to the discussions on destitution, marginality and feminism. Analyzing the aforementioned aspects, this thesis has aimed to survey how rewriters/rewritings can be influential in the reception of Tekin's literary works and examine how her authorial image is constructed within the source and target culture(s). Moreover, the observable data I used in this thesis proved the dual interaction between the reception and image-shaping processes within the source and target culture(s).

This study basically focused on the reception of Tekin's works in the Anglophone literary scene. However, reception of Tekin's works in the other target culture(s) e.g. Francophone literary world might be the subject of future research, if so it would further develop and enhance this study. Moreover, in my view, the concepts of both image-shaping and rewriting appear to be illuminating and I recommend their inclusion for future research on reception studies.

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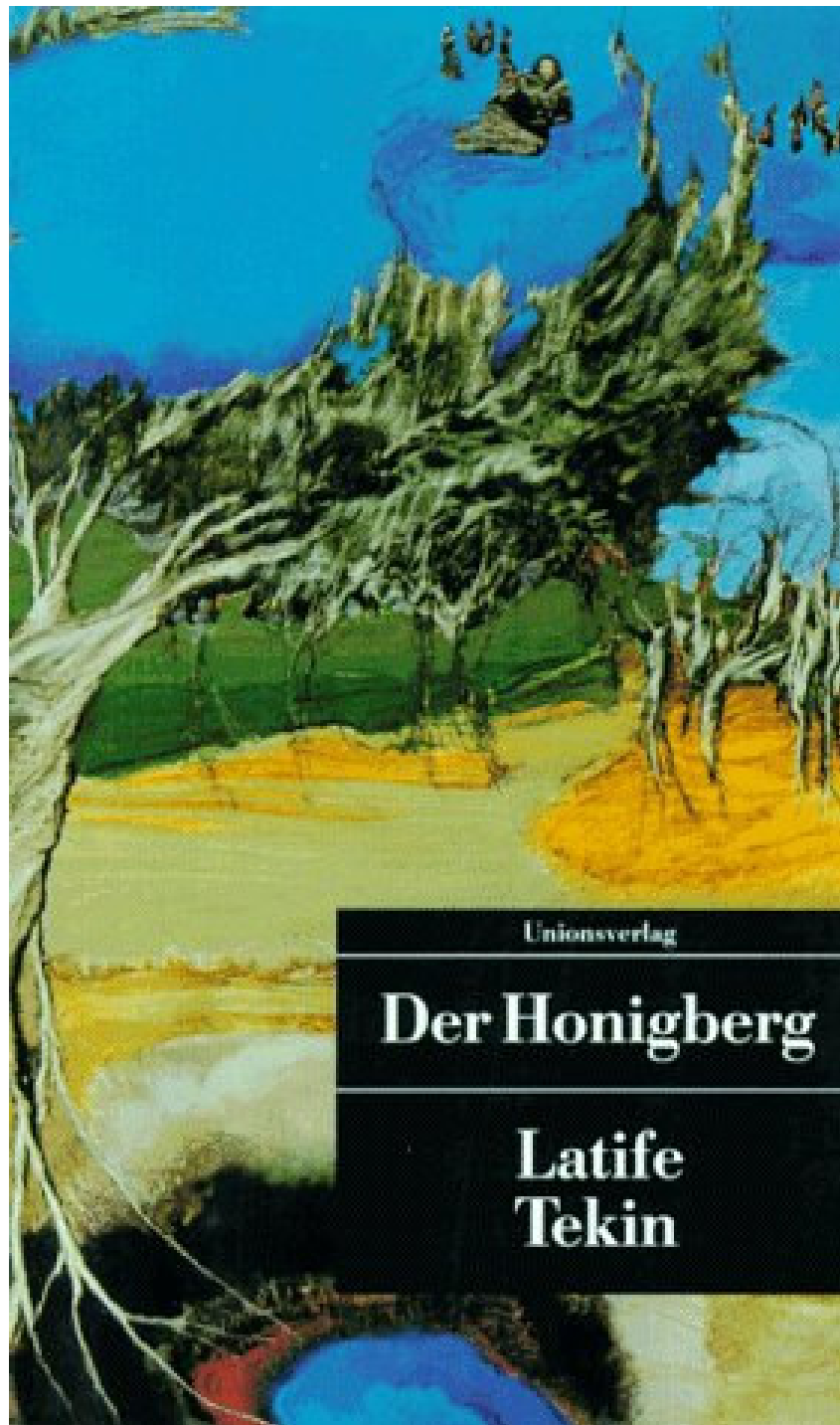
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Appendix 1



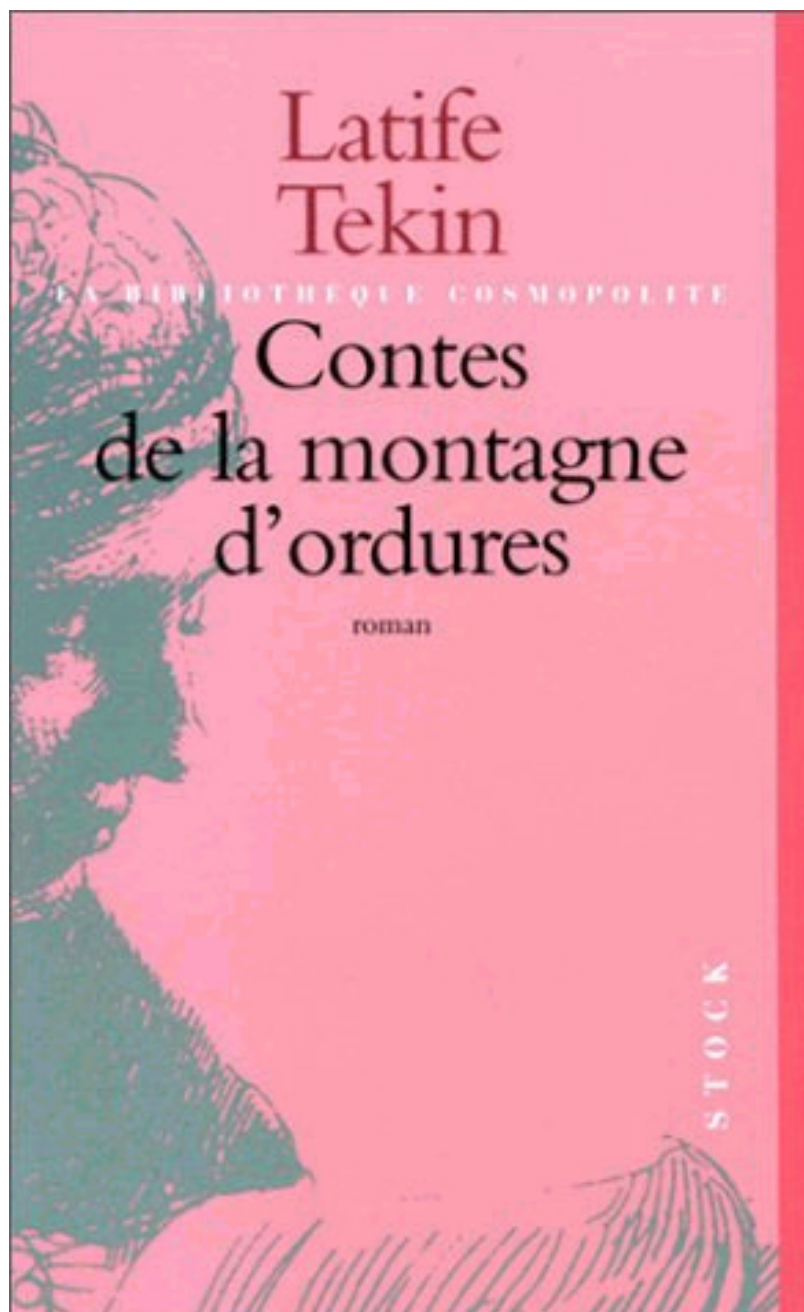
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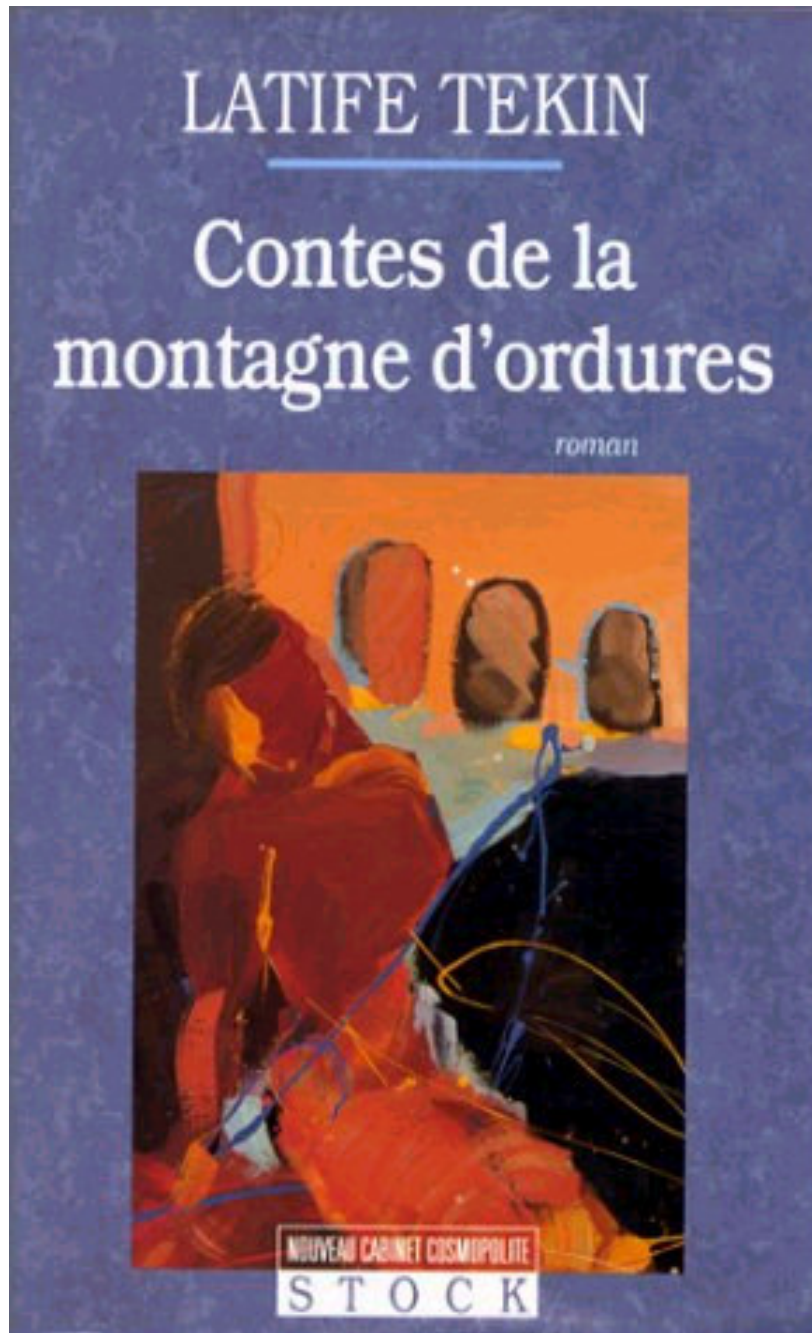
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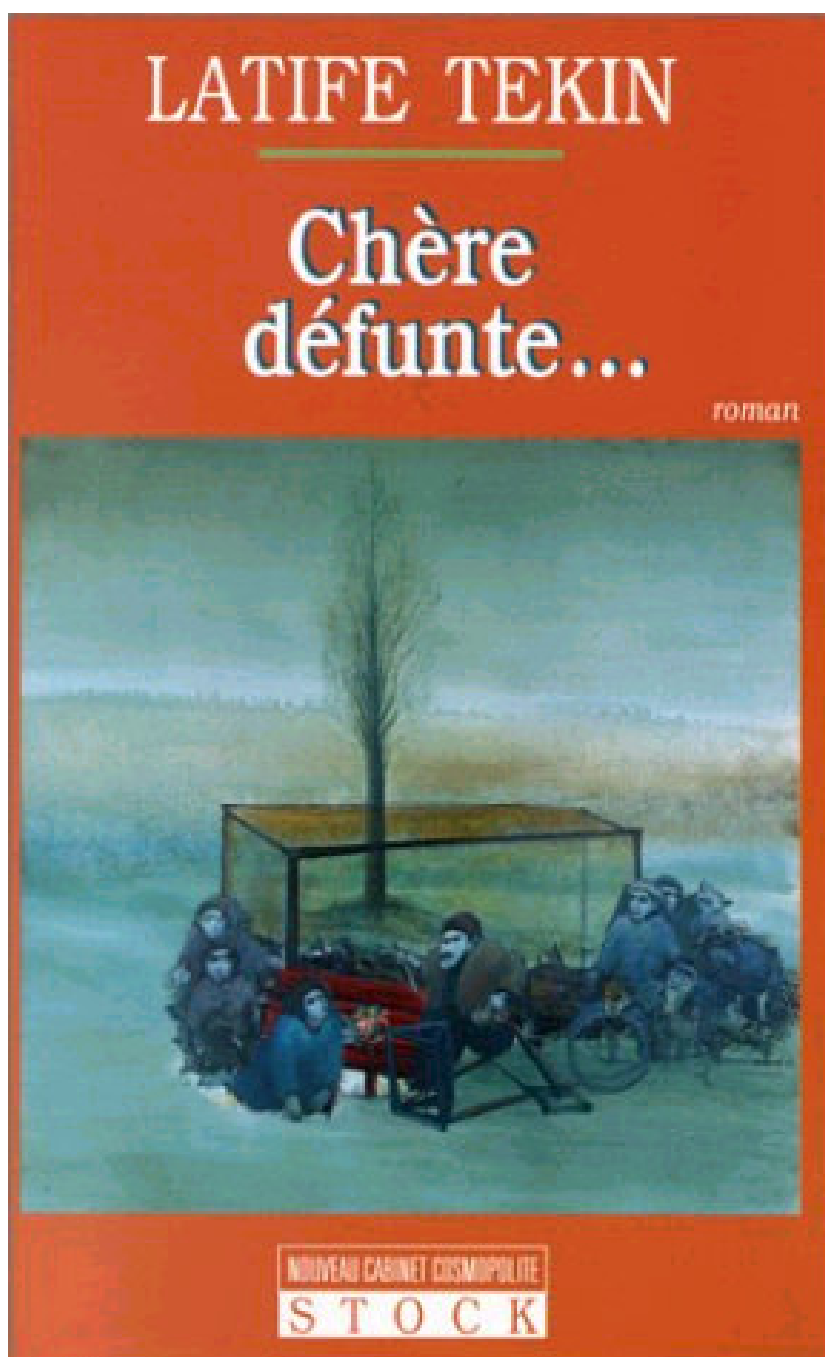
Appendix 4A



Appendix 4B



Appendix 5



Appendix 6

LATIFE TEKIN

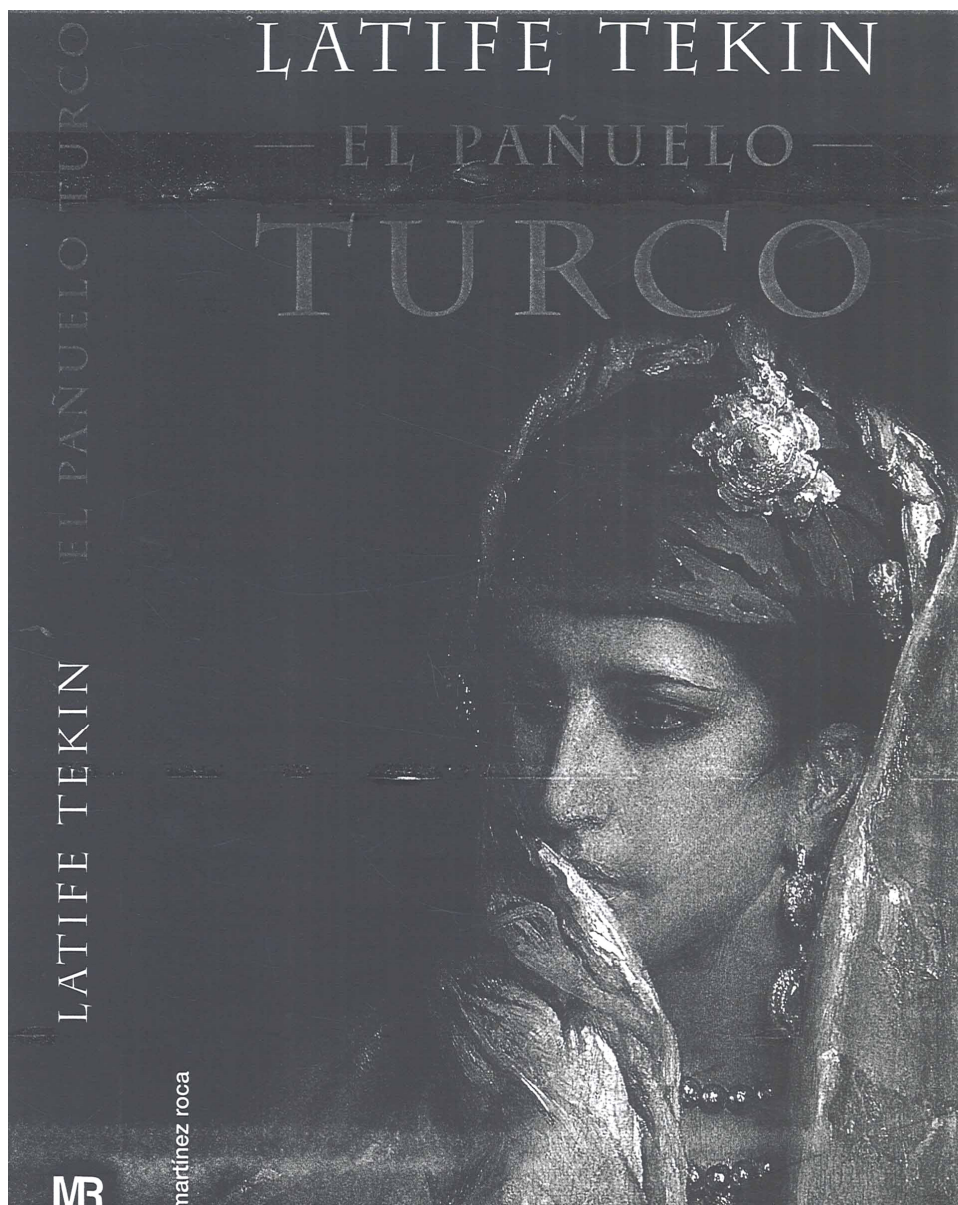
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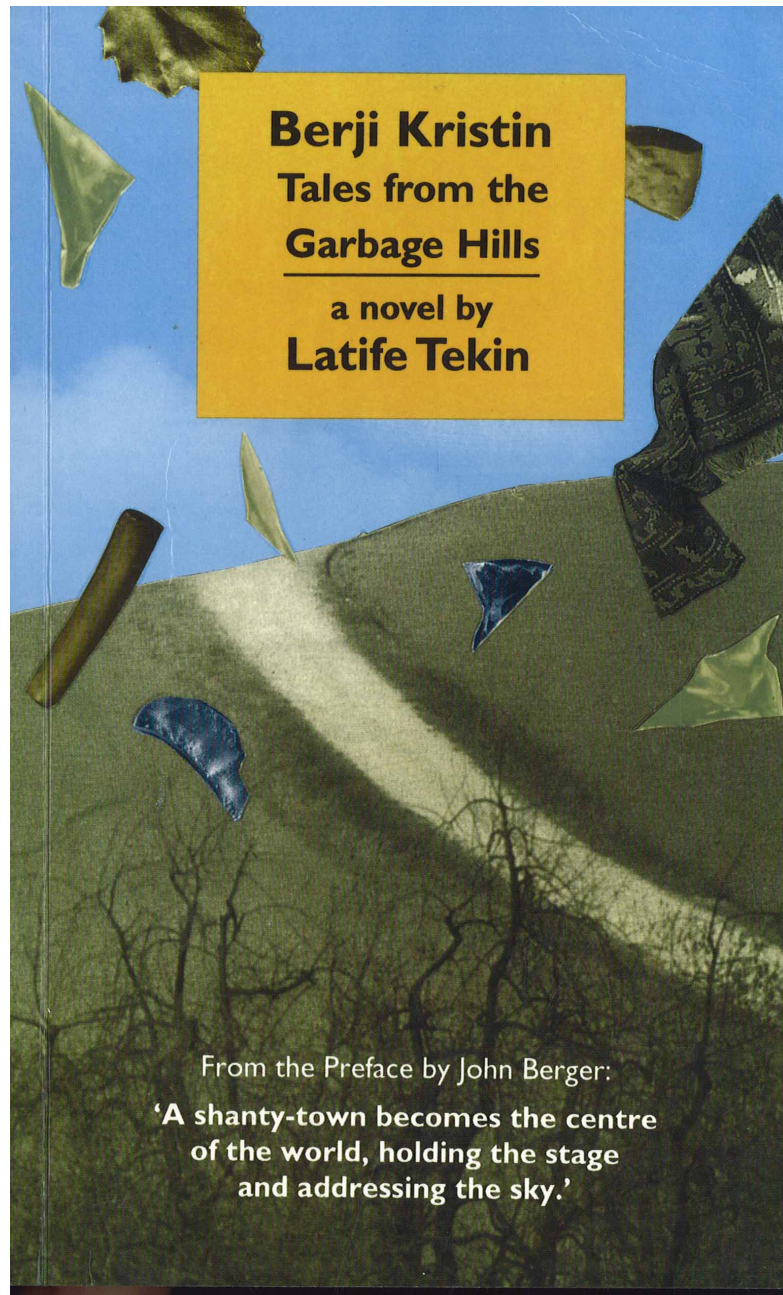
Appendix 7



Appendix 8



Appendix 9A



Appendix 9B

The cast-offs of modern urban life are driven out onto the edges of the city and left to make a life there as best they can. They find themselves in a world of refuse and useless junk — a place which denies any sustainable form of dignified life. Some of the lucky ones find work in a factory, but are ruthlessly exploited. All attempts at reasserting their humanity seem doomed to failure; yet somehow they survive. In this dark fairy tale, Latife Tekin has written a grim parable of survival and dignity.

Latife Tekin was born in 1957 in Karacafenk, in the Turkish province of Kayseri. She started writing the day after the coup d'état in 1980. She says of her own background: 'I am of the generation which found itself in the middle of the political battle the minute I stepped out of childhood.' A major bestseller in her native Turkey, she has written a number of novels and remains politically active.

The translators: Saliha Paker is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Birmingham and teaches at Bogazici University, Istanbul. Ruth Christie teaches English literature at American Summer schools.

**'Tekin seamlessly marries the timelessness of
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An accomplished novel.'**

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'A provocative and enjoyable work.'
The Times Literary Supplement

'A nihilistic wit reminiscent of Samuel Beckett.'
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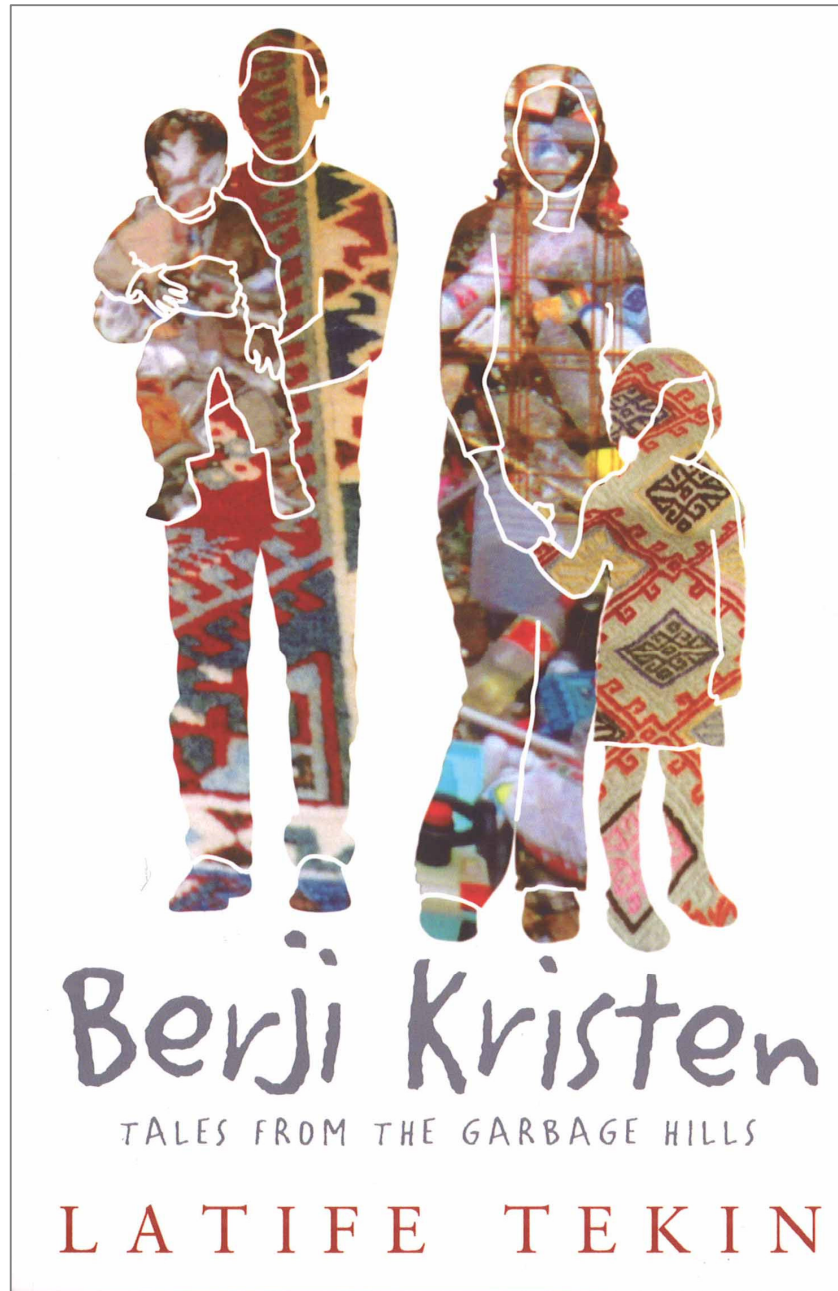
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Appendix 10A



Appendix 10B

From the Preface by John Berger

‘A shanty-town becomes the centre of the world,
holding the stage and addressing the sky’

In Istanbul the cast-offs of modern urban life are driven out onto the edges of the city and left to make a life there as best they can. They find themselves in a world of refuse and useless junk – a place which denies any sustainable form of dignified life. Some of the lucky ones find work in a factory, but are ruthlessly exploited. All attempts at reasserting their humanity seem doomed to failure; yet somehow they survive. In this dark fairy tale Latife Tekin has written a grim parable of survival and dignity.

Translated by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker

Latife Tekin was born in 1957 in Karacafenk, in the Turkish province of Kayseri. She started writing the day after the coup d'état in 1980. She is a major bestseller in Turkey and is the author of *Dear Shameless Death*, also available from Marion Boyars Publishers.

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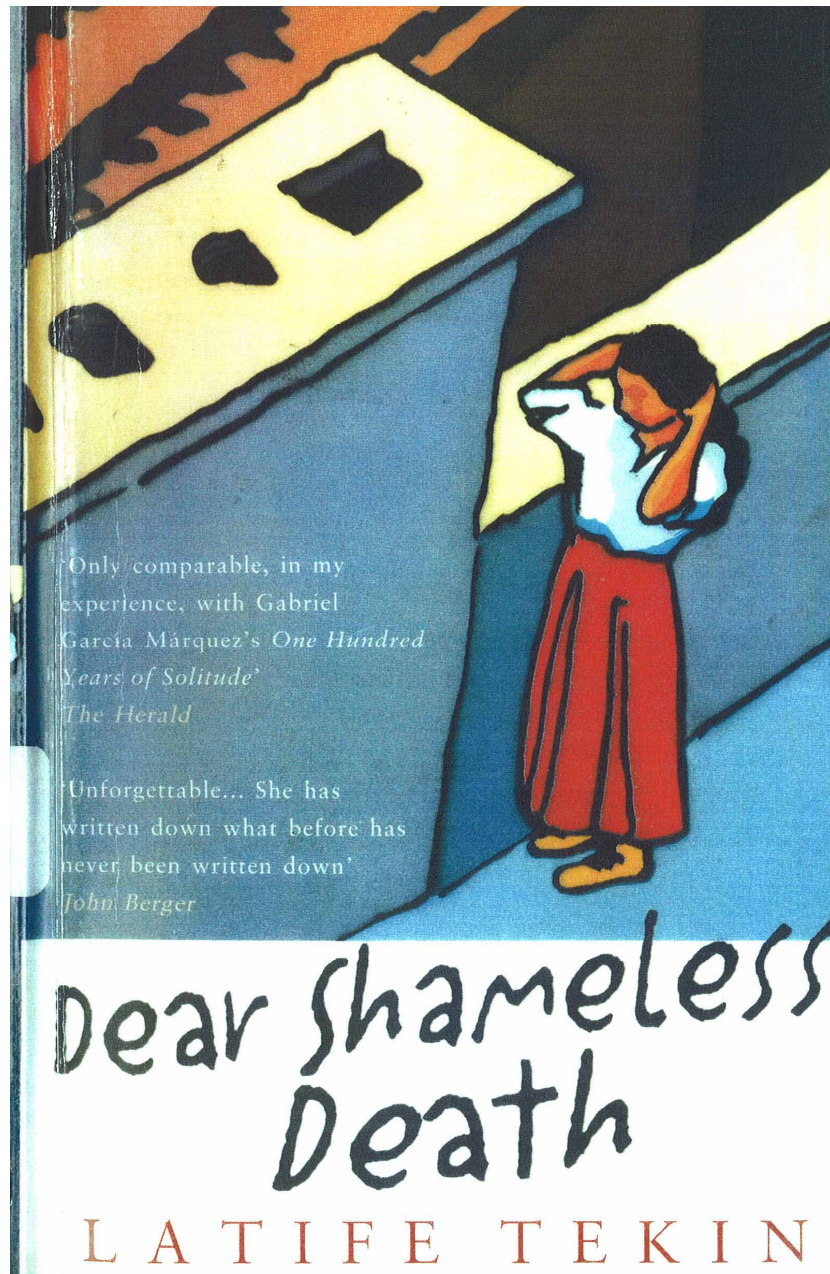
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Appendix 11A

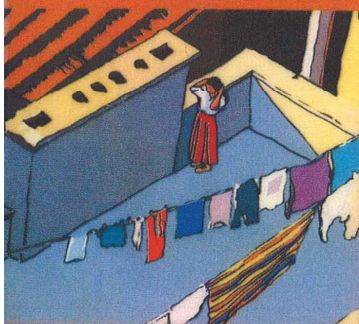


Appendix 11B

'A nihilistic wit reminiscent of Samuel Beckett'

Independent on Sunday

A strange, magical story of a young girl growing up in modern Turkey, from her birth in a small rural village haunted by fairies



and demons to her traumatic move to the big city. Based on her own childhood experiences, Latife Tekin's literary debut marked a turning point in Turkish fiction. Set against the pressures of a rapidly changing society it concentrates on a daughter's struggle against her overbearing mother. Fantastic

and hallucinatory, *Dear Shameless Death* provides fascinating insights into what it means to be a woman growing up in Turkey today.

Translated by Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne.

Latife Tekin is the author of *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, described by *The Women's Review of Books* as 'a small masterpiece of beauty'.

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Appendix 12

1. How did you decide to translate Latife Tekin's *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* and *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* (and *Gümüşlük Akademisi*)?

A friend of mine sent me a copy of *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* when they were first published in Turkey. At the time I was living in London. I remember my students at SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies, where I was teaching Turkish language and literature as part time lecturer) asking me such questions as why Yaşar Kemal was the only Turkish novelist available in English, if there were no writers of urban fiction to be translated, etc. It was encouraging, of course, to hear that they wanted to read more from Turkish authors. This was between 1983-1985. I was in close touch with Nermin Menemencioğlu then, who was very active especially in translating Turkish poetry and short fiction. We were all on the lookout for new, exciting writing, something that would immediately attract the attention of the British audience. It was *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* that really captivated me. I fell in love with the first chapter, the founding of Çiçektepe, which read like an epic and I felt it was crucial to get the style and the tone right. So I asked my friend Ruth Christie if she would work with me. Ruth was a lecturer in English literature at the time. She'd also read Turkish at SOAS. Ruth, as you know, is an amazingly gifted literary translator. At the time, I think she was working on Oktay Rifat's poetry and some short stories, but was unfamiliar with Latife's work. She agreed after she read the book. Then, through Cevat Çapan's help I met Latife Tekin on one of my visits to İstanbul, shortly after her *Gece Dersleri* was published. She was supportive from the start and was always ready to help when we had problems with the text. At the time I met her, we'd found out that there was also an American interested in her work but she hadn't actually begun translating. Once we got permission from Latife, we started on our joint translation of *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları*. By the beginning of 1988 we had the translation ready to be submitted to the publishers.

2. Did you start the translation processes and how?

Yes, as I've just explained, you might say I did my best to start the translation process. We had a fruitful and enjoyable working relationship with Ruth. She worked on more episodes than I did. We edited each other's work and in that process I learned a lot from her. We sent some of our drafts to John Berger who was also deeply interested in Latife's work. We got some good feedback from him, especially about the jingles and rhymes in the book. Eventually we also got him to write a preface for the book which he did with great pleasure.

3. Did you play a part in the publication processes? Did you face with any difficulties? How was the approach of the publishers (in the target culture) towards the translated novels?

Yes. In fact I had to, because we'd started the translation without being commissioned by any publisher. But I had always felt convinced that we would find one, once we'd made some progress with the translation. The first publisher we approached was Carcanet Press in Manchester, who were also publishing Orhan Pamuk's *The White Castle*. Mike Freeman who was the fiction editor there was really excited about Latife's writing. They published an excerpt from our translation in their magazine, *PN Review*, which was met with wide interest by their distinguished readers, one of whom was Christopher Middleton, poet and translator of German and some Turkish poetry. I still keep the letter Mike Freeman sent telling me all about that. Carcanet were really interested. In fact Mike Freeman did the publishers' editing of the book. But unfortunately we couldn't agree with Michael Schmidt on the translators' fee. What he proposed was, we thought then, unacceptably low. So we decided to look for another Publisher. We tried several, such as Granta, Serpent's Tail, Women's Press. They all liked the book but said they couldn't "risk" taking it on. They weren't sure if it would sell well. In the meantime, Müge Gürsoy Sökmen had helped us to approach Marion Boyars whose husband Arthur Boyars was what you might call a "friend of Turkey". Marion had true literary acumen. She had no difficulty in spotting works of literary merit and had published several authors who later won the Nobel Prize. But she was also a sharp negotiator. After lengthy conversations which resulted in no fee at all for the translators, she accepted publishing the book. She also asked me to write an introduction to explain how "real" *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* was, i.e. its Turkish social and literary context.

As you know, the book got very good reviews. It was also published in paperback and has been reprinted twice. In 1998 Marion got interested in publishing another book by Latife and the natural choice seemed to be *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*. But Ruth didn't want to get involved in another project with the same publishers so I asked Mel Kenne with whom I'd already co-translated some works by Haydar Ergülen and Murathan Mungan. The considerable success of *Berji Kristin Tales from the Garbage Hill* had confirmed my belief in a harmonious collaboration with a gifted literary partner. Mel Kenne who lives and teaches in İstanbul is, as you know, an American poet, and a very fine one too. I was delighted when he accepted my offer to do *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm* together. This time we signed a proper translators' contract with Marion Boyars. Shortly after, Marion

died and her daughter, Catheryn Kilgariff, took over. Catheryn succeeded in getting a grant from the Arts Council of Britain for the translation, so this time we were paid. Catheryn also arranged for a publicity tour in England after *Dear Shameless Death* was published.

Translating *Sevgili Arsız Ölüm*, I used to do the first draft, Mel would work on it, then we would start revising and editing together, trying to get the tone right, the narrative as smooth as possible, which is not to say we ironed out the foreignness, that is, the culture-specific aspects of the text. In the final translation process we worked with Ken Hollings, the publishers' editor, a writer himself, who had also edited *Berji Kristin*. Ken asked me to write an introduction, indicating the specific points I should cover. And it was he who had to decide on the stylistic points that would satisfy both British and North American readers, i.e. on what Marion called "mid-Atlantic norms". As both Mel and I were teaching full time, it took us about two years to finish the translation.

As for, *Gümüşlük Akademisi*, Latife Tekin herself asked us to translate it for Nisan Yayıncılık in Istanbul, who had published the Turkish. But the publishers went out of business. So last year Mel and I decided to offer it to Sidney Wade, who was guest-editing the *Translation Review*, an international periodical published by Rainer Schulte at the University of Texas at Dallas. It has just been published under the title "The Academy."

Saliha Paker
20th September 2005
Cunda.

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