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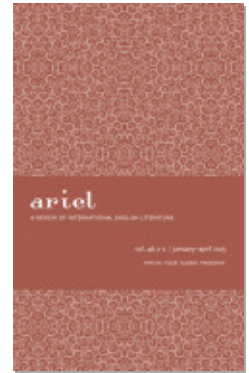
## English Studies in Turkey: An Assessment

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ariel: A Review of International English Literature, Volume 46, Numbers 1-2, January-April 2015, pp. 45-68 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: 10.1353/ari.2015.0013



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## **English Studies in Turkey: An Assessment**

Don Randall

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**Abstract:** This paper assesses the present state of English studies in contemporary Turkey. It begins by noting the Head of Turkey's Higher Education Board's admission of the Board's failure to improve higher education. The paper then confirms the Head's position, first finding the acquisition of English language skills to be generally unsatisfactory among students and also among locally educated faculty members. It ascribes this problem to poor language-teaching practice, which tends to rely too much on translation. This paper also notes the misconception of viewing English studies as a domain of knowledge rather than as a field of study. It argues that these problems have global implications and arise in relation to the global history of English studies. It undertakes a detailed examination of T. B. Macaulay's 1835 "Minute on Indian Education," in which Macaulay presents English literature as a new and potentially edifying subject for higher education and a powerful instrument for more effective imperial management. It then places Macaulay's proposal in relation to Gayatri Spivak's recent advocacy of "aesthetic education." The paper shows that English studies in Turkey tends to conform to the Macaulay model, using scholarly articles published in Turkey to evidence the key elements of the argument. The paper ends with a suggestion that Turkish scholars with Anglophone-world degrees may help Turkish scholarship in the humanities approach international standards of quality and achievement.

**Keywords:** Turkey, English language and literature, translation, Macaulay, Spivak

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In an interview with journalist Gamze Kolcu (published October 8, 2014), Gökhan Çetinsaya, the president of the Higher Education Board, denounced the Board's failure to improve upon the poor state of higher education in Turkey and went so far as to suggest that the Board should be abolished. Çetinsaya specified a key problem that the Board has failed to resolve, stating, "we cannot train qualified academics." The gravity of this problem, in his view, resides in the fact that Turkey is embarking on a period of unprecedented "demographic opportunity," ranking sixth in the world in the rate of increase of student populations in higher education. Çetinsaya's rather startling comments first came to my attention through a Facebook post by a colleague in the Department of Communication and Design, to which she had added a parenthetical comment: "(If only he had spoken about the need for Humanities education)." While I agree that Turkish universities undervalue higher education in the humanities, I must also concede that graduate-level education in the humanities, as it now exists, has contributed to the failure to "train qualified academics."

I am not directly implicated in the problem, as my Department of English Language and Literature has no graduate programmes. But I am very troubled by the fact that my colleagues and I invariably must advise our best graduates, who typically profess a desire to pursue academic careers, to take higher degrees, especially the Ph.D., at Anglophone-world universities. Such an undertaking is not always personally or financially feasible, and in my fifteen years of undergraduate teaching in Turkey, I have seen a distressing number of my best former students resigning themselves to careers as prep school teachers or pursuing graduate degrees in Turkey and tumbling into unsatisfying careers in minor and marginal universities—of which, in accordance with Çetinsaya's "demographic opportunity," there is an ever-growing number.

Çetinsaya's sense of "demographic opportunity" clearly views Turkey from the perspective of globalization. As a teacher of English literature working on the periphery of the Anglophone world, I must note the particular way that processes of globalization impact my professional concerns. The clear emergence of English as a global lingua franca, confirmed by its dominance in international business and commerce and in

the burgeoning fields of computer science and information technology, has important socio-economic and political implications. Canagarajah, writing on the brink of the twenty-first century, duly emphasizes that English teaching can (and frequently does) take shape as linguistic imperialism. Extending this notion, he observes that one of the effects of the “international hegemony of English” is the conversion of English into “linguistic capital” (71, 73). Given that the inequality marking the global distribution of English-language skills—of English as linguistic capital—closely corresponds with the unequal distribution of other forms of capital, teachers of English working outside the Anglophone world must ask themselves if their efforts can succeed in enabling and effectively enriching their students. This is the question that preoccupies me in this paper.

To provide some orienting details of my specific placement within the Turkish academy, I should say that my institution, Bilkent University, was the first private university established in Turkey; it is still the largest and arguably still the most prestigious. In the last few years, our rector has published in the university web pages regular updates on the university’s placement on the various top three-hundred, top one-hundred, or even top fifty lists of world universities. Clearly, these statistics indicate that the university is becoming fully fledged. Though it was the first of a multitude of private universities in Turkey today, Bilkent is not venerably old. It is not yet three decades old, and so I, with more than a dozen years of experience teaching at this university, have been here for more than a third of its lifetime. During this time, I have seen numerous and notable changes, especially in my department. When I first joined the Department of English Language and Literature, it was a medium-sized department of about a dozen full-time faculty, with a few part-time adjuncts and Ph.D. candidates (from other local universities) teaching as many courses as they could get their hands on. The department now consists of only six faculty members, no adjuncts, and no course-hungry Ph.D. candidates. This has partly to do with a decline in student enrollment following the Turkish economic crisis of late 2001. However, the reduction of faculty numbers is not as significant as an accompanying change in proportion. When I started, the department faculty was

roughly half Turkish and half foreign—that is, half of us Turks with degrees from Turkish universities and half of us English-speaking foreigners with degrees from the UK, the US, or in my sole case, Canada. Now that we are six, only one of us is Turkish with Turkish university degrees. Another relatively new colleague, however, is Turkish but has higher degrees from prestigious American universities and a career of several years as an Assistant Professor at a fairly reputable American university. I will return to this particular case later in the paper.

The dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Letters, also our acting chair, has agreed that we need to hire at least one but ideally two new faculty members, and the dean has carefully specified that our departmental hiring committee cannot consider any “local” candidates, but only candidates holding degrees granted by reputable Anglophone-world universities. This disposition is not exactly new; I have sensed it in the past, when the department has had occasion to recruit. But the dean has never before explicitly stated this bias as a recruitment guideline of the Faculty of Humanities and Letters.

This pre-emptive decision against local candidates has to do with the university’s ambitions with respect to international reputation. (In other words, one may say it is part of the university’s response to the pressures of globalization.) As Bilkent’s higher administration has always made clear, the university aims to be a top-ranked research institution—hence the administration’s interest in top three-hundred lists and the like. Research publication achievement is the single most important criterion in the evaluation of faculty members (and their departments), and it has a decisive bearing upon appointments and promotions, salary increments, and “merit bonuses.” Publications are bench-marked in relation to scholarly value; the higher administration uses for this purpose the high-prestige international citation indexes *International Science Index/Social Science Index/Arts & Humanities Citation Index*. In the Faculty of Humanities and Letters, floor hires are at the instructor rank. The usual minimum requirement for a promotion (or appointment) to the assistant professor rank is one article in an *A&HCI*-listed publication, typically accompanied by two or three other publications that are not so listed. In our department, no Turkish colleague has ever satisfied the publication

requirements for an assistant professorship, so they have spent entire careers at the Instructor rank. The only Turkish colleagues of superior rank are those who were promoted to higher ranks by other Turkish universities before coming to Bilkent. Our last remaining Turkish colleague is an instructor who has worked at Bilkent for nearly fifteen years. Another long-standing Turkish colleague has just retired, earlier this academic year, at the instructor rank; indeed, it is this colleague's retirement that has enabled our successful bid for a hire—though a hire that will *not* replace the lost locally educated faculty member with another.

The situation of the locally educated academic, at least in the Faculty of Humanities and Letters, is worsening, but this is not to suggest that the situation was once notably better. Very early in my Bilkent career, I learned that Turkish faculty were paid a fraction of what foreign faculty, even those at the instructor rank, were paid, and that they taught four courses per semester, rather than the three assigned to foreign faculty. The faculty administration also made them take on most of the service the department required: most notably, curriculum development, scheduling of classes, and academic advising. Formerly, the main impediment to happiness for my Turkish colleagues was the low value the administration assigned to them. They were overworked and poorly paid, and effectively prevented from advancing upward through the ranks. At present, however, if the example of my department can serve as a basis for generalization, it seems that universities such as Bilkent that are able to provide better salaries and better working conditions no longer deem Turkish-educated scholars worthy of hire. A low place within university hierarchies is becoming no place within university hierarchies. This trend is evidently becoming more common within the Faculty of Humanities and Letters at Bilkent: all of the recent hires in the Department of American Culture and Literature have been holders of higher degrees from reputable American or Canadian universities and the core curriculum program in Civilizations, Cultures and Ideas has exclusively hired holders of distinguished Anglophone-world Ph.D.s since its inception in 2001.

I am not arguing, however, that my university underestimates my Turkish-educated colleagues. In my experience, they are typically (if not

quite invariably) inadequate in their development of English-language skills, and the standards of achievement represented in their doctoral dissertations and thus their doctoral degrees do not bear comparison with those of reputable Anglophone-world universities. These colleagues are responsible and hard-working, but their understanding of the textual practice, research projects, and scholarly debates characterizing the literary humanities today is quite limited. In brief, they serve to confirm, in relation to the literary humanities, Çetinsaya's denunciation of the failure of Turkish higher education. My locally educated Turkish colleagues are evidently products of an under-performing educational system, which is now leading to their increasing "ghettoization" within the Turkish university system. Although Turkish educational bureaucracies such as Çetinsaya's Board pose innumerable impediments to improvement in Turkish higher education, the poor quality of higher education, at least in relation to English language and literature, is now thoroughly entrenched in teaching and scholarship: ineffective practices of English-language teaching impede English-language acquisition, and a long-standing misconception of literary studies as a field of scholarly endeavour precludes effective contribution to scholarly research and publication. These practices and this misconception have arisen, in part, as effects of bureaucratization, but they have to do, more tellingly, with English's accession to the status of a global hegemonic language and with the unpleasant historical fact that "literary studies became disciplinized concurrently with colonialism" (Spivak 11).

As a literary scholar working at a major English-medium university outside the English-speaking world, I am very aware of the large number of teachers, most of them holders of Master's degrees in English as a Foreign Language or Teaching English as a Second Language, whom the university engages to teach English to my prospective students. My job is to activate English skills in the critical study of literature. I assess, evaluate, and correct English expression, but I am not expected, nor am I really enabled, to *teach* English language skills in an applied manner in the classroom. However, I remain committed to an educational tenet whose value my Turkish experience has only served to confirm: critical cogency is inseparable from language proficiency. Over time, I have

concluded that my students' difficulties with English are often problems of erroneous teaching rather than of inefficient learning.

In the secondary schools and in university prep schools, English teaching tends to take shape, quite unproductively, as a practice of translation. Literary and linguistic theorists have raised doubts about the possibility of translation. Indeed, Emily Apter, a leading theorist of translation, has moved recently from an already quite challenging position—that translation is impossible but necessary *quand même*—to a still more intellectually exigent stance: untranslatability, and untranslatable semantic units (such as the wonderful and inescapably everyday *quand même* of Apter's earlier work, *The Translation Zone*) are indispensable considerations for any work of effective, responsible translation. Impossibility thus asserts itself as the singular enabling condition of possibility.

Given her title, *Against World Literature*, Apter presents herself as a rather valuable ally for those, like me, who teach English literature in English outside the Anglophone world. But in relation to language teaching and language acquisition, I must note that Apter's clear if tacit demand for the utmost rigour and sophistication in the practice of translation finds no port of entry into the Turkish public education system as it exists today. Translation—particularly unitary translation—from the familiar language (Turkish) to the target language (English) dominates educational practice: in Turkish, we say this; in English, they say that. Questions of relational meaning, syntax, and linguistic recontextualization remain unexplored, and this is a legacy that we, in the degree-granting departments at the universities, inherit. In my department, we have two translation courses, both required courses in our curriculum, and I, a scholar of English literature, have had trouble understanding why we offer such courses, except perhaps as electives.

I have deep doubts about how well translation can serve as the focal orientation of any language learning project, even in cases where the familiar language has very pronounced correspondences with the target language, as in the case of the English speaker who wishes to learn French. (Apter, one may note, is a professor of French and comparative literature, and though inhabiting the relatively navigable “translation zone” of English and French, has forged her theory of untranslatability *quand*



*même*.) Few cognate forms assist a Turkish speaker learning English, and the learner must grapple with many very different grammatical, syntactical, and idiomatic structures. I could put forward numerous instances of awkward or incorrect conversational English arising from misapplied practices of translation, but I will restrict myself to one brief example that is pertinent to the writing of literary criticism. A student might write “in nineteenth century literature very social conscious.” The intended proposition is “in the nineteenth century, literature is very socially conscious.” The first problem, the absent definite article, has to do with the fact that Turkish nouns contain the definite article in their basic composition. So, the Turkish school child who learns that we say “kedi” and they say “cat” should actually learn that we say “kedi” and they say “the cat,” but unit-to-unit translation tends to get in the way of this more accurate understanding. The second problem in the sample sentence, the absent “to be” verb, recalls that Turkish does not use a “to be” verb to characterize subjects. “Çocuk zeki” translates unit-to-unit as “the child clever,” but it means “the child is clever.” The habit of unit-to-unit translation tends, however, to forget the need for the “is,” particularly when sentence propositions become more complex. The third problem, the use of “social” where the sentence requires “socially,” relates to the absence of specifically adverbial forms in Turkish and the flexibility of the functions of Turkish words: nouns can often function as adjectives (leading to problematic English formulations like “coward man” for “coward” or “cowardly man”), and many adjectives also serve as adverbs (“iyi” meaning “good” or “well,” and the much used “çok” meaning “much,” “many,” or “very” as well as, depending on tone and context, “too much,” “too many,” or “excessively”).

In my view, students need much more modelling of grammatical, idiomatic English. Students might then learn to reproduce in their own expression those elements, forms, and patterns they repeatedly hear or read. At present, few teachers model English in the secondary schools and not many more do in the university prep schools. Moreover, in both cases such modelling is frequently awkward or erroneous, based as it too often is on unit-to-unit translation.

Because I believe that published scholarship provides the best index of the standards in place in academic environments, I will evidence all my subsequent argumentation using examples of scholarly articles published in Turkey. A few of the larger, more established Turkish universities publish journals providing a forum to scholars working in the field of literary studies and affiliated areas such as cultural studies or translation and interpretation. *Interactions: Ege Journal of British and American Studies* presents one of the better examples: all articles are in English, and while the majority of the authors are Turkish, the journal also publishes the work of foreign scholars (many but not all of them employed at Turkish universities). Ege University's *Interactions*, however, does not provide online access to articles, and print copies, especially outside of Turkey, would not be easy to come by. I am therefore choosing to evaluate the peer-reviewed journal of the Faculty of Letters at the equally reputable Hacettepe University, *Edebiyat Facültesi Dergisi/Journal of Faculty of Letters*. The journal has been published since 1983 (*Interactions* is only a little more than ten years old), and has contributed significantly to many scholars' academic careers. *EFD/JFL* provides full online access to most articles in all issue numbers from 1983, and to all articles in all issue numbers for the last several years. The majority of articles are in Turkish, but many are in English, and at least in recent years, all articles by members of faculty of Departments of English Language and Literature are in English. The journal also publishes articles in French and German, though these are relatively few.

An overview of the journal's history of publication suggests a slight curve of improvement in relation to critical sophistication and originality. However, a detailed examination of selected articles appearing in the most recent issues shows that the journal is not yet approaching international standards of quality. The quality of the journal's publications still varies from reasonably competent to entirely unsatisfactory. I begin with an article in the latter category, which will serve to flesh out my points about the problematic use of translation in language learning. In 2011, Dr. Nihal Yetkin, Assistant Professor in the Department of Translation and Interpretation at Izmir University of Economics, published "Partial

False Friends in English-Turkish Translations: Diplomatic Texts.” In her abstract, Yetkin states that “32 senior students” served as subjects for the project, and that their participation entailed the translation of various “diplomatic texts” (207). These translations functioned as “take-home exams” entailing a duly substantial contribution to final grades, and thus demonstrating a very close link between Yetkin’s research and her teaching. Unfortunately, although she acknowledges early in her article that “It is French from which Turkish has been influenced most” and that English “borrowed substantially from Latin either directly or indirectly through French” (210), and although she authorizes her work and its assumptions in relation to the “Turkish Language Institute” (208), which is authorized in turn as “an extension of the Language Revolution led by Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic” (210), Yetkin repeatedly misrepresents borrowings from French as borrowings from English. The following is an egregious example:

“ii. In 70 pairs detected, the Turkish word borrowed from English has a narrower meaning in Turkish and is mostly restricted to a technical field, whereas its English counterpart belongs to the common core language. Ex.2. *formation* means something formed. *formasyon*, being an educational term, means a license required for teaching at public schools” (212).

The Turkish word “formasyon” bears some phonetic resemblance to the English word “formation,” but is a nearly exact phonetic rendering of the French word “formation.” And indeed, the fact that Turkish has borrowed so many modern terms from French is a result not only of France’s dominant neocolonial influence on Turkish social and political life in the late Ottoman period but also of the very close phonetic correspondence between the two languages. The key to recognizing a borrowing from French is the very close or exact reproduction of French phonetics in the Turkish word. Mistaken identification of the source language is not invariably problematic, as many English words share, fairly precisely, the meaning of their French cognates. However, “formasyon” is a problem case because its use as an educational term follows French rather than English usage. But Yetkin’s sense of English usage is

clearly very limited, as is demonstrated by her inadequate and misleading definition of the English “formation.” One should also note that Yetkin’s use of the English word “license” is a mistaken rendering of the Turkish “lisans,” which is once again a word borrowed from French and reproduces the phonetics and meaning of the French source-word. Other words that Yetkin claims are borrowings from English but are clearly borrowings from French include “aktör,” which phonetically and in its usage reproduces the French “acteur,” not the English “actor”; “avukat,” which is phonetically very close and identical in meaning to the French “avocat,” while it is only secondarily linked with the English “advocate”; “otorite,” which matches the meaning of “authority” or “autorité” quite closely but only matches the French word phonetically. This work of translation and interpretation is, I must emphasize, part and parcel of the researcher’s teaching practice.

In my work with my own students, I have frequently noted their pronounced tendency to mistakenly assume that words they recognize as borrowed are borrowed from English. To provide just one example, “caricature” is commonly pronounced, in class discussions, as “karikatur,” the Turkish word that phonetically reproduces the French “caricature.” In this as in a number of other cases, the main problem does not reside in students’ mistaken assumptions but in instruction that combines inefficient translation with misleading modelling. Teachers have confirmed the students’ mistaken assumptions at the “lise” (lycée) and perhaps even after their arrival at the university. Clearly, the contemporary status of English as the hegemonic language of a globalized world has obscured, for teachers and students, the earlier preponderant influence of French.

Yetkin, whose main formation (French-inflected usage) is in translation and interpretation rather than literary studies, cannot serve as a focal case for my assessment. All subsequent *EFD/JFL* publications I will consider are by scholars working in English language and literature in Turkey. To engage most effectively with this evaluative work, I must first recall some key aspects of the history of English studies as a modern academic field of study, as this history is pertinent to the current state of English studies in Turkey. Macaulay’s 1835 “Minute on

Indian Education” is, in this respect, a crucial document; indeed, the “Minute” stands as the inaugural moment in the eventual institution of English studies as a field of study for higher education. Significantly, it conceives of English literary study as an educational practice for export (rather than for domestic use) and more specifically as an instrument for a systematized and strategic cultural imperialism.

Entering contemporary debate on “the revival and promotion of literature, and the encouragement of learned natives” in India (par. 2),<sup>1</sup> Macaulay challenges the parliamentary opinion that Arabic or Sanskrit should be the languages of instruction, advocating instead for English. He asks, “which language is best worth knowing?” (par. 9). His answer assumes “the intrinsic superiority of the Western literature” and includes the infamously Eurocentric assertion that “a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (par. 10). His argument proceeds with the more narrowly ethnocentric proposition that English “stands pre-eminent even among the languages of the West” and that English literature possesses great “intrinsic value” (par. 12). However, Macaulay’s advocacy for the institution of English studies in India, as it develops, is predominantly pragmatic and utilitarian. Macaulay clearly associates English with power and wealth: “In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by the higher class of natives at the seats of Government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East” (par. 12). According to Macaulay, while English literature conserves a vast repository of “sound philosophy and true history” and “full and correct information respecting every experimental science which tends to preserve the health, to increase the comfort, or to expand the intellect of man” (par. 12), English is also beneficial to colonial learners by providing not only the special status and prestige that its acquisition accords but also the possibility of earning a livelihood through its use. Contemporary globalized culture recommends the study of English to students in non-Anglophone, developing nations on much the same terms as those Macaulay put forward nearly two centuries ago. Indeed, it is remarkable (though not entirely surprising) that Canagarajah’s ground-breaking study of the place of English in Tamil-dominated Sri

Lankan society confirms my key findings. In Turkey and in Canagarajah's Sri Lanka, English is a status-affirming acquisition. It is "a class marker (i.e. as the language of the educated and rich)" (Canagarajah 72). This is especially pertinent in the case of Turkey, where difference in social class so clearly distinguishes those who learn German through the experience of migrant labour from those who have learned English, most typically through university study. As in Macaulay's time, English is associated with wealth and power, and English-language capacity also functions (in Bourdieu's terms) as cultural capital. As Canagarajah states, English enables its speakers "to claim material and symbolic rewards" through its use in a variety of social situations (73).

Although social conditions relating to the study of English in developing nations like Turkey or Sri Lanka correspond quite closely to those Macaulay outlines, the adoption of Macaulay's educational scheme, in which students both become subjects and learn language through literary study, is deeply problematic, especially in relation to English as an academic discipline in contemporary universities. As several scholars (most notably Chris Baldick) have made clear, the government institutionalized the study of English literature in Britain only after its inception in India and followed Macaulay's model. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, institutions taught English literature to women and working-class men with much the same motives as in India: they sought to improve the learners (through the edifying and civilizing force of literature) and, crucially, to exercise more effective social control of the learners. With its full-fledged development as an academic discipline, however, English studies has increasingly distanced itself from the social and "civilizing" mission that so strongly defined its origins. Macaulay did not envision English literature as a complex site for the exercise of critical thinking, nor did he distinguish between language learning and literary study. He assumed that the moral and intellectual wealth contained in English literature is accessible by applying skills of English language and that the study of literature will then further develop and refine students' proficiency. For Macaulay, contact with literature is formative in a thorough sense: it shapes the entire character, the entire person. Indeed, his faith in English literature's power to form or reform

readers was at the heart of his imperial project. Macaulay hoped and believed that English studies in India would produce an immensely useful class of imperial mediators, “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (par. 34). He saw English literature as a domain of knowledge possessing an intrinsic moral and civilizing authority, but, crucially, he also assumed that this domain of knowledge was thoroughly constituted in advance of the educational project for which it would provide the subject matter. Macaulay did not expect Indian scholars to engage critically with the English literary canon; he expected them to read and conform. To read English literature is to become English—in opinions, morals, and intellect. It is precisely in this respect that English studies today is not Macaulay’s brainchild but his changeling. In departments of English all over the Anglophone world, English literature is a field of study more than a domain of knowledge, and (most) scholars take it as a basic responsibility to wrestle with, question and test the intellectual, moral, cultural, and political contents of the texts they read. In Turkey, however, and most probably in other nations of the non-Anglophone world, English studies is typically understood as the pre-constituted domain of knowledge Macaulay envisioned.

What intrigues and excites me most about Gayatri Spivak’s recent model for literary studies in a globalizing world is its uncannily close affiliation with Macaulay’s model and indeed with Macaulay’s key assumptions. Spivak shares (or one may almost say inherits) Macaulay’s great faith in the capacity of literary engagements to shape and transform minds. But her faith is highly theorized while Macaulay’s is not, and she does not profess anything akin to his secure faith in outcomes. Spivak asserts that literature is “an excellent vehicle of ideological transformation. For good or for ill. As medicine or as poison” (39). The literary text discovers itself as *pharmakon* through the element of alienation that enters into an identification with the text (the identification Macaulay considered so crucial) when the text’s “implied reader is culturally alien and hegemonic” (38). To read a text, Spivak argues, one must remake oneself as its implied reader, and “the implied reader is constructed within a consolidated system of cultural representation”

that is “supposedly indigenous to the literature under consideration” (36). This is Macaulay’s faith updated and rendered in theoretical terms, with the difference that Macaulay believed that true knowledge of humanity and of the world—not ideology—resides in the pages of English books, and he had no worry about effects of alienation arising within the act of reading. For Spivak, cultural displacement or recontextualization is significantly destabilizing. The Indian (or, I would add, the Turkish) reader of British literature—the reader of the peripheries with multiple positions—will bring to his or her reading an “alienating assent” (38), which may be, as earlier noted, a poison or cure, but which in any case is not the secure process of recognition and adoption by which Macaulay hoped to remake (and subordinate) Indian readers. Spivak’s innovation is very engaging for me when considered in relation to my sense of English studies today as Macaulay’s changeling.

Spivak’s intervention suggests that the conventionally empowered understanding inherent in Macaulay’s model of literary reading can manifest itself paradoxically, in ways that, although not directly opposed to power and its discourse, are nonetheless misaligned and potentially duplicitous. Thus, Spivak is able to propose (perhaps rather too momentarily) that literary studies today is “the staged battleground for epistemes” (55). However, when she addresses the brass tacks of teaching practice, in an earlier moment of her argument, one may perceive a significant limitation in relation to real world situations: “What is the basic difference,” she asks, “between teaching a second language as an instrument of communication and teaching the same language so that the student can appreciate literature?” (36). Her first response is evasive and Macaulayan—not, this time, in an uncanny way: “It is certainly possible to argue that in the most successful cases the difference is not easy to discern” (36). But Spivak does concede a “difference in orientation,” and in elaborating upon this difference arrives quite quickly at her rich and suggestive argument about the implied reader function in literary reading (36). The problem is that Spivak’s complex conception of the implied reader can only be activated with students who have already acquired advanced language skills. One can almost believe in the working of Macaulay’s model on a step by step basis, with language learning



and literary appreciation proceeding hand in hand along a shared path. But Spivak's sense of literary reading, at once more subtle and more robust, forbids such a belief, although her thinking remains very intriguing in political terms.

In Turkey, English studies conforms with Macaulay's model in significant ways, but I do not discern in it the perturbatory, unsettling, paradoxical effects that Spivak's thinking might lead me to hope for. A department of English language and literature has its place in the vast majority of Turkish universities, whereas departments for the specialized study of Turkish language and literature are few. (Bilkent has a small Department of Turkish Literature, but it offers only postgraduate programmes.) Departments for the study of other Western languages and literatures are fewer and typically much smaller in terms of faculty and enrolment numbers. Thus, Turkish higher education seems to have accepted, at least tacitly, Macaulay's belief in the pre-eminence of English among Western languages. The studied material in departments of English language and literature, moreover, consists of texts from the British Isles and the Commonwealth, while the study of American literature takes place in departments of American culture and literature (in Turkey, the second most common department concerned with literary study). This suggests an acceptance of Macaulay's sense of the extraordinarily deep and intimate unity of British culture and its literature. The division between English and American studies is the first indication that the Turkish academy conceives of English studies, as Macaulay does, as a domain of knowledge rather than a field of study. This problematic aspect of English studies in Turkey is best evidenced by an examination of scholarship in English studies published in Turkey.

Dr. Aytül Özüm, Associate Professor in English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, published "Dickens in *Bleak House* as a Member of the System: An Althusserian Reading" in 2012. At a glance, the viability of an Althusserian reading in 2012 seems open to doubt, especially when applied to such a mercurial, rhetorically unbridled and effusive writer as Dickens. However, the suggestion that the bewildering, even maddening condition of being "in Chancery" may be elucidated by Althusser's notion of the interpellation of individuals

by complex socio-political formations is at least intriguing. Indeed, one reads through Özüm's article with a sense that she has at least approached genuine critical finds but also, unfortunately, with the repeatedly confirmed recognition that her language powers—both her comprehension and her expression—are failing her and preventing real critical achievement. The following passage attempts to effectively engage the theory with the literary text:

While Dickens writes about his age, early and mid-Victorian Age, and explains how the ways (both negative and positive) of Victorian ideology are put into practice, Althusser does not specify the type of regime, furthermore he asserts that “ideology has no history” (1971a, p. 159) and he explains it as “ideology has no history, which emphatically does not mean that there is no history in it (on the contrary, for it is merely the pale, empty and inverted reflection of real history) but that it has no history of its own [ . . . ] not in a negative sense [ . . . ] but in an absolutely positive sense” (1971a, pp. 160–61). This positive sense of ideology is that it belongs to all ages in “omni-historical reality” (Althusser, 1971a, p. 161). More importantly he highlights the practice of exploitation and associates it with the ways through which one understands that positive connotation of ideology stumbles. (106)

In addition to notable instances of unclear, awkward, or incorrect expression and an egregious failure of sentence structure, the passage puts forward a mistaken understanding of Althusser's use of “negative” and “positive”—strict theoretical terms for Althusser, which Özüm has interpreted loosely and popularly. “Negative” for Özüm evidently means “bad,” “unfavourable,” “discouraging,” or “disadvantageous,” and “positive” means “good,” “favourable,” “encouraging,” or “advantageous”—thus Özüm's erroneous mention of ideology's possible “positive connotation.” A similar inadequacy of language competence and critical understanding becomes evident in Özüm's failure to accurately represent and maintain the crucial distinction, in Althusserian theory, between concrete individuals and subjects.

In addition to the problems of inadequate English-language mastery, Özüm's article also manifests a misunderstanding of what constitutes a viable critical project within contemporary literary studies. Her second paragraph begins a long-winded work of character mapping and plot summary, of which I quote here only a portion:

One of the Jarndyces, John Jarndyce is on the side of the good characters and he takes the whole affair very calmly and does not expect anything from the suit. He has a young ward Esther Summerson who is not directly concerned with the Chancery business but she is the other narrator of the text; for this reason she very closely observes the events taking place around. Ada and Richard are the other wards of John Jarndyce but they are on the opposite side of the suit. Richard gets too much involved in the lawsuit and goes crazy. Two other suitors, Miss Flight and Mr Gridley have already gone mad. Illuminated by the lights of these facts readers follow the signs of the book both in detective Bucket's procedures and in Lady Dedlock's investigations. (105)

Again, problems of grammar and idiom trouble this passage, but more importantly, one must consider the shape it gives to the critical project. Although Özüm's title proposes "An Althusserian Reading," the writing evidently is not primarily addressed, as a critical "reading" should be, to other readers of Dickens' great novel. Indeed, the extensive synopsis assumes that many readers of the article have *not* read the novel. A review of Özüm's list of references confirms, moreover, that her work does not engage with current critical debates. Her most recent critical resource is the introduction to her 1996 Penguin edition of *Bleak House*; the only two listed articles that address the novel specifically are from 1984 and 1995.

The prospective reader of Özüm's article may be an advanced student who is considering undertaking the novel but wants or requires guidance or, more likely, a fellow member of faculty who, in Özüm's view, may wish to consider the novel as teaching material and will therefore

appreciate some demonstration of how the novel might be taught. Such an approach, however, has a deadening effect on a literary text, which is no longer read as a living text but merely an archival element whose life and work are already accomplished. The text is no longer a topic for negotiation and debate (between readers and “readings”) but only for teaching, and this is in large part the reason why Özüm has assumed that its value and importance can be understood without reading it. Literary studies, however, cannot maintain a place in the contemporary humanities if *Bleak House*, one of the most notable achievements of one of the nineteenth century’s most important novelists, can be read as an archival document, an accounted-for element in a domain of knowledge, a kind of literary monument of the sort Macaulay wished to have taught to Indian colonial subjects. In literary studies today, instructors teach not texts but textual practice. This is also the critical difference between Macaulay’s and Spivak’s conceptions of literary studies.

Özüm’s article, I must stress, is not a poor example of the literary criticism published by *EFD/JFL*; it is one of the better articles, though not among the best, as other articles in the same journal issue demonstrate. Huriye Reis’ “Chaucer’s Fabliau Women: Paradigms of Resistance and Pleasure,” though not very original, is notably more competent in English-language expression and in argumentation. However, Mustafa Şahiner’s “Hellish Discourses: Shakespeare’s *Richard III* and Greene’s *Selimus*” is notably weaker than Özüm’s article on both counts, and it presents itself much more clearly as a teaching guide or an assembly of lecture notes, as when Şahiner glosses the word “malice” with “the desire to hurt someone” as one might do in an undergraduate classroom (163). The main problems of the article are quite neatly contained in the concluding remarks:

The portrayal of Selimus contributes to the prevalent concept of the Turk as evil enemy in early modern England as well as contributing to the creation and preservation of nationalistic sentiments. With his play *Richard III*, Shakespeare introduces another atheist tyrant whose evilness surpasses any character including Selimus. He develops Richard into a villain who

dominates the early modern English stages. Richard's end, along with many other history plays also fulfils the justification of Tudor ascension to the English throne. (165)

Şahiner's choice of the archival text *Selimus* has a kind of literary-touristic rather than a seriously critical motivation: European representations of Turks are always of interest in Turkey. His use of Greene's *Selimus* arrives at little more than a recognition of its deployment of "the wicked Turk," a stock image occurring frequently in the Shakespearean canon and in many other works of European renaissance literature. More fatal, however, to any potential critical value this article might wish to claim is the author's evident sense that Greene and Shakespeare are doing much the same thing in much the same way. Both *Richard III* and *Selimus* are, for Şahiner, texts in the English literary archive representing diabolical usurper-kings, the former having the slight distinction of producing the eponymous character that came to dominate "early modern English stages." The article's final sentence confirms Şahiner's mistaken "archivizing" of *Richard III*: it states that the play serves to justify "Tudor ascension to the English throne." This basic element of historical context, though necessary when discussing the play in an undergraduate classroom, can hardly stand as the concluding point of a scholarly article aiming to offer up-to-date analysis and interpretation of the play.

My objection is that *Richard III* is a living text, as a quick review of the recent production history of contemporary theatres all over the English-speaking world and recent scholarship, which includes, to provide just one instance, *Richard III: A Critical Reader* (2013), would confirm. Though Şahiner makes slight use of numerous articles (several of which are more than half a century old), his most recent sources are two articles published in the *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1992 and 1996, and the earlier of these, by E. Pearlman, he overuses, quoting from it to articulate several of his own argumentative points. Clearly, Şahiner is not motivated by the belief that his writing can produce new critical understanding of Shakespeare's text.

Having undertaken this assessment of English studies in Turkey, I should now acknowledge that in Turkish universities the study of

English has as its main goal the production of teachers of English. My objections may therefore appear as those of a specialist arguing from a set of concerns that are not broadly shared. The problem, however, is that each new generation of teachers is fed back into the public education system to take up the task of forming future generations of teachers. This closed system has at all levels of education a low ceiling of achievement, which is tellingly reflected in scholarly articles published by faculty in departments of English language and literature in the nation's universities. Returning, moreover, to my earlier points about the English language as global *lingua franca*, and therefore as a potent form of cultural capital in our globalizing world, I must assert that English poorly learned, though certainly not stripped of capital value, cannot approach the value of English well learned.

The limited success of English-language learning and of English studies in Turkey is not, I must stress, merely a local concern; it is a systemic effect with quite important geopolitical implications precisely because of its deep implications in the history of English studies as a modern academic discipline. Macaulay's problematic educational model has the rather contradictory goal of empowering and also dominating students of English. Macaulay does not aim to make Indians the peers of Englishmen but rather to subordinate them more thoroughly and make them more useful and effective subordinates. In Macaulay's world and ours, English is cultural capital, and the global distribution of this particular form of wealth reflects and contributes to the unequal distribution of all forms of capital. English is both element and instrument, in part constituting and in part serving to maintain contemporary inequalities among nations. The poor state of English studies in Turkey is therefore much more than an academic specialist's concern.

In the short term, I see no solution to the problem I have delineated and assessed. Turkey's wealthier private universities will continue to prefer and, increasingly, to demand Anglophone-world Ph.D.s as a basic requirement for posts in their humanities faculties, generally, and most particularly in their departments of English language and literature. The perceived value—indeed, the real value—of higher degrees awarded by Turkish universities will continue to decline, and standards of

scholarship in departments that continue to hire holders of such degrees will remain poor. However, if I consider Çetinsaya's main concern that "we cannot train qualified academics" in relation to the circulation and distribution of capital, I see some hope for the improvement of education in the longer term (and well before 2050, Çetinsaya's foreseen end date of Turkey's current "demographic opportunity"). Early in this essay I mentioned a new element in the faculty mix in my department, a recently acquired Turkish colleague with higher degrees from reputable American universities. I should clarify that she is a new element for our department, but not so for Turkish universities more generally considered. For decades, a small number of Turkish scholars in all disciplines have pursued high-prestige foreign degrees, and an appreciable proportion of these have returned to Turkey (our rector, for example, holds a Ph.D. in engineering from Stanford). However, such scholars, I must stress, are much more numerous today than previously. We have our recently acquired colleague, who has now published her first book with Oxford University Press. In response to a job posting this fall, we received, for the first time in the history of the department, an application from one of our own graduates, who expects to receive her Ph.D. soon from the University of Birmingham. Just last week (early December 2014), I received a request from Yaşar University (a fairly new, well-funded private university in Izmir) to evaluate a candidate, currently an instructor in English language and literature, who has applied for a promotion to assistant professor. She has her first degree from Middle East Technical University, one of Turkey's best state universities, her second degree from Leibniz University in Hannover, and her Ph.D. from the University of British Columbia. Her research is solid. Her English is (as one would expect) excellent. This candidate, whom I have very strongly recommended for promotion, my previously mentioned colleague, and the recent applicant who graduated from our department with high honors several years ago exemplify the possibility of a favorable change in the distribution of cultural capital. The language skills and scholarly capacity that their degrees serve to confirm constitute them as bearers of capital, which can be productively put to work within Turkish higher education. These scholars might shift students' ambitions, at least to a degree, away

from language learning as the primary if not exclusive focus of their education and toward the more socially transformative values that inhere in the “aesthetic education” that Gayatri Spivak advocates. Such scholars are better positioned than I am to understand and enact the “alienating assent” that Spivak considers so essential for a socially transformative contemporary reading practice. I entertain the hope, then, that at least a few Turkish universities will be positioned, in the not-too-distant future, to confer higher degrees in English language and literature that merit comparison with degrees from reputable Anglophone-world institutions. Then—if I may risk a sudden entry into a utopian register—Turkish higher education might begin to discover the power to productively challenge and transform the purpose and meaning of English studies from a position outside the English-speaking world.

## Notes

- 1 I am using an online version of Macaulay’s text, which numbers paragraphs to facilitate referencing. The original document is: Bureau of Education. *Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781–1839)*. Edited by H. Sharp. Calcutta: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1920. Reprint. Delhi: National Archives of India, 1965, 107–117.

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