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## **Depictions of Mad Women Figures in Turkish and Japanese Literature of the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Focusing on female figures, this research aims to clarify the reception of western discourse on madness in Japanese and Turkish novels influenced by naturalism. It approaches the issue of madness through the lenses of Michel Foucault (1926-1984) who pointed out socio-cultural embeddedness of madness and its role in defining the limits of “normality” in the West.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, madness became one of the centerpieces of that-time literary works. Among the dominant literary movements of that period, naturalism was notable for amalgamating culturally motivated and scientific approaches to mental disorders. Notably, Japan, and Turkey (Ottoman Empire) experienced modernization and westernization around the same time. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, naturalism was among the main motives in both countries’ literature. For example, hysteric and mad female protagonists were depicted in such literary works as Tōson Shimazaki (1872-1943)’s *Rōjō* (1903) and Ahmet Mithat (1444-1912)’s *Hayal ve Hakikat* (1892). Each country had its unique accumulated knowledge on madness. A famous example is “Layla and Majnun”, an Arabic love story where protagonist descends into madness due to his love which arguably takes its origins in Sufi philosophy. On the other hand, Japan had “Monogurui Noh”, a theater where a central character loses the beloved one and goes insane. It is evident that while the perception of madness for both countries was inseparable from sacredness in earlier times, the late-19<sup>th</sup>-century literary works unprecedentedly linked female madness to the discourse of (ab-)normality.

This article argues that despite thematic diversity, both countries’ authors had a tendency of depicting women who had deviant social behaviors by labeling them as mad. On the other hand, following differences exist between Turkey and Japan. While Turkish writers used hysteria for validating their portrayals of mad women with scientific proofs, Japanese authors tended to have more traditional depictions of a mad woman that consequently gave a way to stigmatic images imprinted with sexuality.