

# **Power and Victimization**

## **The Rhetoric of Sociopolitical Power and Representations of Victimhood in Contemporary Literature**

**Proceedings of a Symposium**

**Held by the Department of American Culture and Literature  
Haliç University, Istanbul, 13-15 April 2005**

**Editors**

**Oya Berk**

**Sırma Soran Gumpert**



Oya Berk and Sirma Soran Gumpert (eds.)

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## Foreword

The Department of American Culture and Literature at Haliç University, Istanbul, conducted a symposium on ‘The Rhetoric of Sociopolitical Power and Representations of Victimhood in Contemporary Literature’ from 13–15 April 2005. This symposium, hosting 24 participants from various countries, was the third in a series providing a platform for literary scholars to discuss literary works from contemporary literatures in light of the leading questions and issues in contemporary literary criticism. The papers presented at the symposium touched upon a wide range of topics, including the entanglements between politics and literature, the relationship between oppressors and oppressed, problems of minority groups, colonization, racial and gender discrimination, war, and terrorism. While the emphasis was on Anglophone literatures and works from Britain, the United States, Canada, the West Indies, and South Africa, treatments of French, German, Egyptian, Turkish, Argentine, and Japanese writing were also included. Such a wide spectrum made it possible for participants to approach the subject from multiple perspectives and led to fruitful discussions on how today’s literature concerns itself with the role of the subject as both victimized and victimizer.

We would like to take this opportunity to give our warm thanks to our keynote speakers, Professor Dr. Sibel Irzık (Sabancı University, Istanbul) and Associate Professor Dr. Dane Johnson (San Francisco State University) for their enlightening presentations. We are deeply thankful to the Academic Committee, the Organizing Committee and the participants for their valuable work: without their contributions this conference could not have been realized. We extend our warmest thanks to Koray Melikoğlu, co-editor of the ‘Studies in English Literatures’ series, for his invaluable help in making these published proceedings a reality. We also want to express our sincere gratitude to faculty members Professor Yusuf Eradam and Banu Özel from the Department of American Culture and Literature at Haliç University, and Dr. Ayşe Ece from the Department of English Language Teaching at Marmara University for their commitment and support in the organization of the symposium and the preparation of this book.

We are indebted to Dr. Atok Olgun for his kind technical support in preparing the call for papers, the invitation, and the printed proceedings of the symposium.

Our special thanks go to the Vice Rector and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Haliç University, Professor Atilla Özalpan, for his generous help and encouraging support. We are also grateful to our Rector, Professor Ahmet Çakır, and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Haliç University, Professor Gündüz Gedikođlu, for their help and encouragement.

Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank Öz-el Ticaret for their financial support.

### **The Editors**

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