

## **The Development of the Character of Rabia in the novel *Sinekli Bakkal* by Halide Edip Adivar**

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### **Abstract**

Ottoman Empire was in a socio-political and cultural transformation during the second half of the 19th century, and radical steps were taken in the direction of Westernization. The Westernization movement, which gained momentum with the beginning of the Tanzimat (imperial edict of reorganization), turned the issue of how to reconcile Western values with the traditional into a problematic. This problematic became one of the most important issues among the intellectuals and the writers of the period. Halide Edip Adivar focuses on the problem of Westernization in her cult novel *Sinekli Bakkal*. The author, which situates the novel within a certain period of II. Abdülhamit's reign, demonstrates the social life and contradictions of the period, which ends with the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy, and tries to reconcile the values of the West and the East through the Rabia character. Halide Edip makes visible through her fiction the characteristic aspects of the period, such as the East-West dichotomy, II. Abdülhamit's oppressive policy, and the changing social representation of women. Although the novel puts one of the back streets of Aksaray in the center, it exhibits an approach that refers to the general social structure. The people and spaces of Sinekli Bakkal Street were established as a micro-level model of the macro structure. In this sense, person and space reflect not only symbolic meanings but also functional ones in the fiction of the novel. As the main character of the novel, Rabia is the one that carries the author's message as the plot develops around her. Parallel to Rabia's transformation, the society was also transforming, and the process was painful. *Sinekli Bakkal* can also be considered as a novel that represents the maturation of the Rabia character. In this article, Rabia's relationship with other characters in the novel will be focused on, which is argued to be effective in shaping her personality, and the forms these relationships take will be evaluated.

**Keywords:** Halide Edip Adivar, Sinekli Bakkal, Rabia as character, Ottoman society