



## RELEVANCE OF THE HUMAN PROBLEM IN MODERN TURKISH PHILOSOPHY

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### ABSTRACT

In modern Turkish philosophy, the human problem holds significant relevance. As a rapidly evolving society, Turkey faces an array of challenges related to human existence, identity, and values. Understanding and addressing these issues is vital for the development and progress of the country. Therefore, analyzing the human problem from a philosophical perspective becomes crucial in order to shed light on the complexities surrounding Turkish society and pave the way for solutions to these challenges.

**Keywords and expressions:** social philosophy, modern Turkish philosophy, human problem, anthropology, individuality, collectivity, globalization, Niyazi Berkes, Teoman Durani, Abdurrahman Kuchuk, Erol Gyung

In modern Turkish philosophy, the human problem holds significant relevance. As a rapidly evolving society, Turkey faces an array of challenges related to human existence, identity, and values. Understanding and addressing these issues is vital for the development and progress of the country. Therefore, analyzing the human problem from a philosophical perspective becomes crucial in order to shed light on the complexities surrounding Turkish society and pave the way for solutions to these challenges.

**Brief overview of Turkish philosophy.** Turkish philosophy emerged in the early 20th century, drawing inspiration from various Western philosophical traditions such as existentialism and pragmatism. The human problem, which centers on the nature of human existence, consciousness, and freedom, has remained a central theme in modern Turkish philosophy. It seeks to address the complexities and challenges posed by modernity and globalization, as well as the unique socio-political context of Turkey. Through critical examination and reinterpretation of traditional Islamic thought, Turkish philosophers have





sought to articulate a distinctly Turkish philosophical perspective that is relevant to contemporary societal issues.

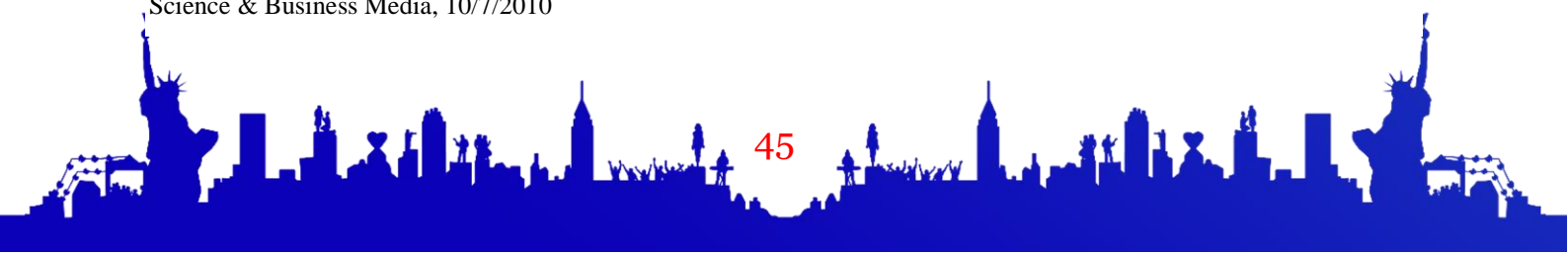
**Importance of addressing the human problem in philosophy.** In the realm of philosophy, addressing the human problem holds immense significance. By delving into the complexities and intricacies of human existence, philosophers strive to decipher the purpose, meaning, and essence of life. This comprehensive examination of the human condition allows for a deeper understanding of our own existence, as well as our interactions with the world and with others. Moreover, exploring the human problem also sheds light on the ethical dilemmas, social structures, and cultural dynamics that shape our societies and influences our decision-making processes. Consequently, philosophers have long recognized the importance of addressing the human problem as a fundamental endeavor in pursuit of wisdom and knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

While modern Turkish philosophy has grappled with a myriad of complex and interdisciplinary issues, the relevance of the human problem remains a central focus. Drawing on diverse philosophical traditions such as existentialism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, Turkish philosophers have delved into questions surrounding human nature, freedom, subjectivity, and ethics. By examining the human condition in the context of Turkey's unique historical and cultural landscape, these philosophers strive to shed light on the challenges facing individuals and society, ultimately aiming to contribute to the cultivation of a more humane and just society.

**Historical Context of Turkish Philosophy.** In understanding the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy, it is crucial to examine the historical context of Turkish philosophy. Turkish philosophical thought has been deeply influenced by various intellectual and cultural developments throughout history. From the early Islamic period to the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent reforms of the Republic of Turkey, the evolution of Turkish philosophy reflects a combination of Eastern and Western influences. This amalgamation has resulted in a unique philosophical discourse that seeks to address the human problem within the specific cultural, social, and political context of Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup> Hannes Kuch. 'Humiliation, Degradation, Dehumanization.' Human Dignity Violated, Paulus Kaufmann, Springer Science & Business Media, 10/7/2010





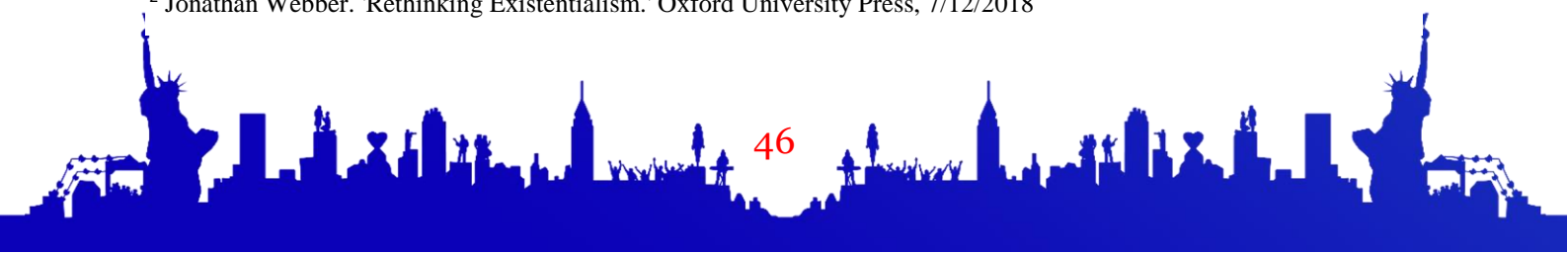
**Influence of Western philosophy on Turkish thought.** One area of Western philosophy that has heavily influenced Turkish thought is existentialism. Existentialism, with its emphasis on the individual's existence and the freedom and responsibility of human beings, has resonated with many Turkish philosophers. Existential ideas such as the struggle for individual authenticity, the meaning of existence, and the importance of subjective experience have become prevalent themes in modern Turkish philosophy. This influence demonstrates the relevance of the human problem in Turkish thought, as it allows philosophers to explore and reflect on the existential dilemmas and challenges faced by individuals in Turkish society.

**Emergence of Turkish philosophy as a distinct field.** One of the significant developments in the field of philosophy in Turkey has been the emergence of Turkish philosophy as a distinct area of study. The formation of a distinct field of Turkish philosophy is quite significant as it signifies the growing interest and recognition of Turkish philosophers in addressing philosophical issues utilizing their own cultural and historical background. This emergence has been influenced by various factors, including the decline of Western dominance in philosophy and the increasing relevance of local problems faced by the Turkish society. As a result, Turkish philosophers have started to develop a unique perspective that takes into account their own philosophical heritage and the specific challenges faced by their society. This distinct field of Turkish philosophy has gained attention both nationally and internationally, and there has been an increased effort to integrate Turkish philosophical ideas into the broader global discourse of philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

**Key figures and their contributions to the human problem.** One of the key figures in modern Turkish philosophy who has made significant contributions to the understanding of the human problem is Ahmet Cevizci. Cevizci argues that the human problem lies in the tension between reason and faith, and that this tension can only be resolved through the recognition and acceptance of plurality. He emphasizes the importance of dialogue and tolerance in addressing the human problem, proposing a framework that promotes coexistence and mutual understanding in a diverse society. Cevizci's ideas have been influential in shaping the discourse on the human problem in contemporary Turkish philosophy.

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Webber. 'Rethinking Existentialism.' Oxford University Press, 7/12/2018





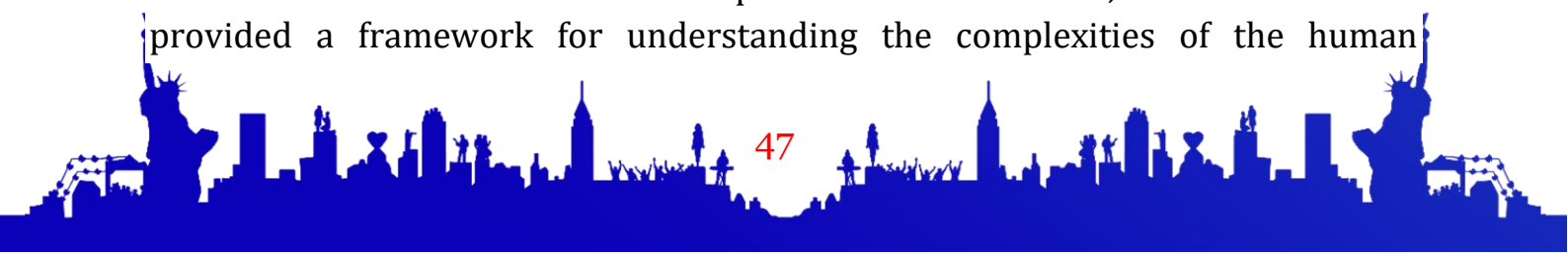
In conclusion, the study and analysis of the human problem within the realm of modern Turkish philosophy holds immense relevance for various reasons. Firstly, it allows scholars to understand the unique socio-cultural context of Turkey and its impact on philosophical thinking. Additionally, it sheds light on the intricate dynamics between tradition and modernity, as well as the complexities of identity formation in the Turkish society. Furthermore, examining the human problem within this philosophical framework provides valuable insights into the ethical dilemmas and challenges faced by individuals in contemporary Turkey. Ultimately, this exploration prompts a deeper understanding of the human condition and its implications in the Turkish context.

**The Human Problem in Modern Turkish Philosophy.** Finally, the concept of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy is of utmost importance as it sheds light on the unique challenges faced by Turkish intellectuals in the context of globalization and societal changes. Specifically, this problem explores the tension between tradition and progress, religion and secularism, and individualism versus collectivism. Turkish philosophers grapple with these complex issues, seeking to redefine the role of the individual in a rapidly evolving society while maintaining a sense of cultural identity.

**Definition and exploration of the human problem.** In modern Turkish philosophy, the human problem remains a central topic of exploration. Its definition revolves around the complex interplay between individual consciousness, societal dynamics, and the quest for meaning and purpose in life. As humans navigate the inherent challenges of existence, they encounter philosophical dilemmas and existential questions that shape their worldview and actions. Thus, understanding and addressing the human problem becomes crucial for scholars and thinkers seeking to develop comprehensive theories and frameworks for understanding the human experience in the modern Turkish context.

### **1. Existentialist perspectives on human existence and freedom**

Existentialist perspectives on human existence and freedom have played a significant role in modern Turkish philosophy. Existentialism emphasizes the individual's subjective experience and the importance of personal freedom. In the context of Turkish philosophy, existentialism has contributed to debates on identity, spirituality, and moral responsibility. By highlighting the subjective nature of human existence and the power of one's choices, existentialism has provided a framework for understanding the complexities of the human





problem in modern Turkish society. This perspective has helped scholars and philosophers in Turkey explore the challenges and potentials of human freedom and self-determination in a rapidly changing world.<sup>3</sup>

**Ethical considerations in understanding the human condition.** Another important aspect in understanding the human condition from an ethical perspective is the consideration of ethical principles and moral values. In modern Turkish philosophy, scholars have emphasized the significance of ethics in relation to the human problem. They argue that ethical considerations are crucial for comprehending human behavior, choices, and actions. By examining human conduct through an ethical lens, researchers aim to gain insights into the motives, intentions, and consequences of human actions, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the human condition. Furthermore, ethical considerations provide a framework for evaluating and critiquing societal norms, cultural practices, and institutional structures, with the aim of promoting fairness, justice, and human dignity.

**Relevance of the Human Problem in Modern Turkish Society.** In analyzing the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish society, it is evident that it plays a crucial role in understanding the challenges faced by individuals within the country. The human problem, with its complexities and intricacies, is particularly significant in the context of contemporary Turkish philosophy. This is because it sheds light on the various societal issues, such as identity crises, political unrest, and economic disparities, which continue to impact the lives of Turkish individuals. Consequently, addressing the human problem becomes imperative in formulating effective solutions for these pressing concerns.

**Analysis of societal challenges faced by Turkey.** In conclusion, the analysis of societal challenges faced by Turkey is crucial in understanding the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy. These challenges encompass a wide range of issues, including political instability, socio-economic disparities, cultural conflicts, and human rights violations. Examining these challenges through the lens of philosophy allows for a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and potential solutions. Moreover, it emphasizes the necessity of adopting a multidisciplinary approach that integrates philosophical, sociological, and political perspectives to address these challenges effectively. Ultimately, this analysis highlights the importance of philosophical inquiry in shaping a more inclusive, just, and prosperous Turkish society.

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<sup>3</sup>Jonathan Webber. 'Rethinking Existentialism.' Oxford University Press, 7/12/2018



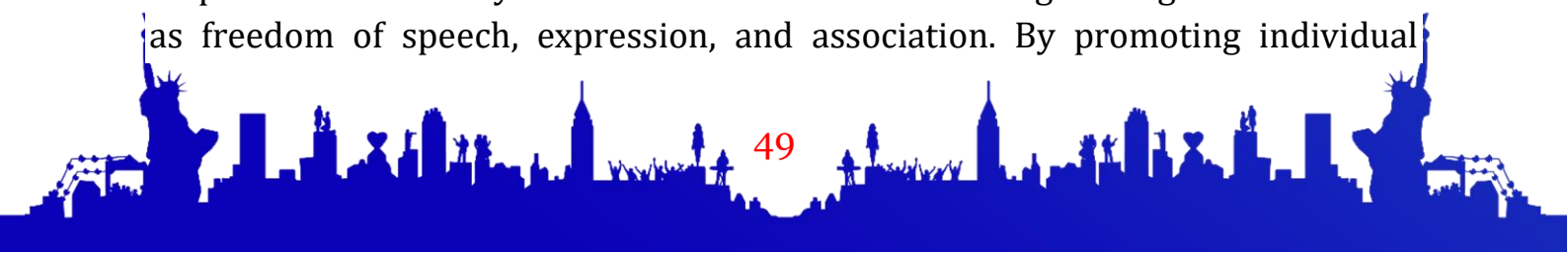


**Cultural and religious diversity.** Cultural and religious diversity in modern Turkish society has played a significant role in shaping the country's philosophical discourse. The recognition and acceptance of diverse cultures and religious beliefs have become crucial for promoting harmony and respect among individuals. Tackling the human problem in this context requires examining the intersectionality of different cultural and religious identities and understanding the ways in which they contribute to the overall fabric of society. Modern Turkish philosophers have acknowledged the relevance of this issue, emphasizing the importance of tolerance, mutual understanding, and inclusivity in creating a more harmonious and equitable society.

**Political instability and authoritarianism.** Political instability and authoritarianism have been persistent challenges in modern Turkish philosophy. Turkey has witnessed numerous political upheavals and transitions throughout its history, disrupting the stability of its governance. The rise of authoritarian leaders and ideologies has further exacerbated the problem, limiting citizens' freedoms and suppressing dissent. These issues have profound implications for the development of Turkish philosophy, as they shape the intellectual landscape and influence the perspectives of philosophers striving to navigate and critique these societal dilemmas.

**Discussion of how addressing the human problem can contribute to solutions.** In contemporary Turkish philosophy, the relevance of the human problem is evident in the discussion of how addressing this problem can contribute to potential solutions. By recognizing and understanding the complexities of the human condition, philosophers argue that it becomes possible to identify and address the root causes of societal issues. This awareness enables scholars to develop comprehensive approaches and strategies aimed at resolving these problems, thereby promoting social progress and well-being. Consequently, the exploration of the human problem plays a pivotal role in modern Turkish philosophy's quest for meaningful and practical solutions to societal challenges.

**Promoting individual freedom and autonomy.** Promoting individual freedom and autonomy is a fundamental principle in modern Turkish philosophy. Turkey, as a nation transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy, places great emphasis on the value of individualism and personal liberty. Philosophers have explored the significance of human rights and the need for a society that respects the autonomy of its citizens. This includes safeguarding freedoms such as freedom of speech, expression, and association. By promoting individual





freedom, Turkey aims to ensure that its citizens can exercise their rights and participate actively in shaping their own lives and the society they live in.<sup>4</sup>

**Fostering ethical behavior and moral responsibility.** Furthermore, fostering ethical behavior and moral responsibility is essential in modern Turkish philosophy. As society evolves and encounters new challenges, it becomes imperative to cultivate individuals who are guided by a strong ethical compass. By instilling a sense of moral responsibility, philosophers aim to promote integrity and accountability in the actions and decisions of individuals. This ethical framework not only contributes to the betterment of society but also ensures that individuals understand the consequences of their choices and act in accordance with moral principles. Moreover, by fostering a commitment to ethical behavior, Turkish philosophy seeks to develop individuals who are empathetic and compassionate, fostering a sense of unity and social cohesion.

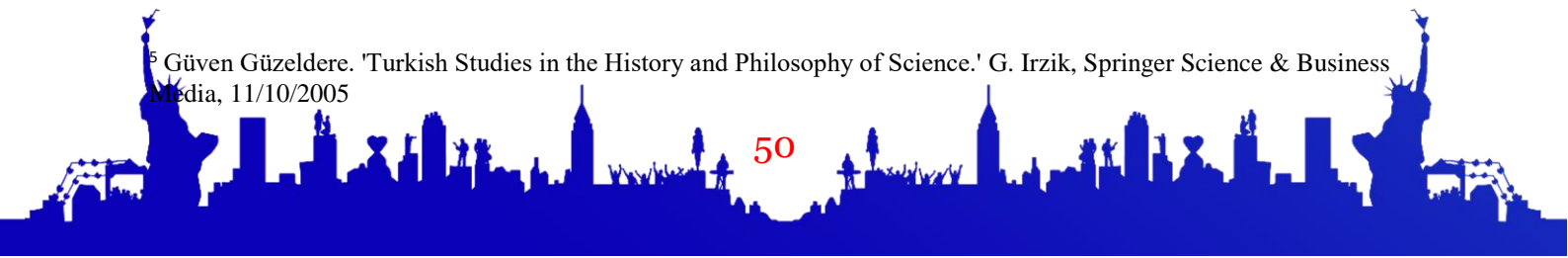
**Encouraging social cohesion and inclusivity.** Another aspect of modern Turkish philosophy that highlights its relevance to contemporary society is its emphasis on encouraging social cohesion and inclusivity. In addressing the human problem, philosophers have recognized the importance of creating a harmonious and inclusive society where individuals from diverse backgrounds can coexist peacefully. By promoting social cohesion, philosophers aim to minimize social conflicts and create a sense of belonging and solidarity among individuals. This inclusive approach encourages dialogue and understanding, fostering a sense of shared humanity and promoting a more unified society.<sup>5</sup>

In the context of modern Turkish philosophy, the relevance of the human problem cannot be undermined. Scholars and philosophers have extensively explored the intricacies of the human condition, grappling with questions of existence, consciousness, and self-realization. Understanding the human problem is integral to comprehending the complexities of society, culture, and individual identity. Interrogating the nature of humanity enables us to critically evaluate our values, beliefs, and actions in order to attain a more meaningful and purposeful existence. Hence, the exploration of the human problem remains a vital pursuit in modern Turkish philosophy.

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<sup>4</sup> Güven Güzeldere. 'Turkish Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science.' G. Irzik, Springer Science & Business Media, 11/10/2005

<sup>5</sup> Güven Güzeldere. 'Turkish Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science.' G. Irzik, Springer Science & Business Media, 11/10/2005



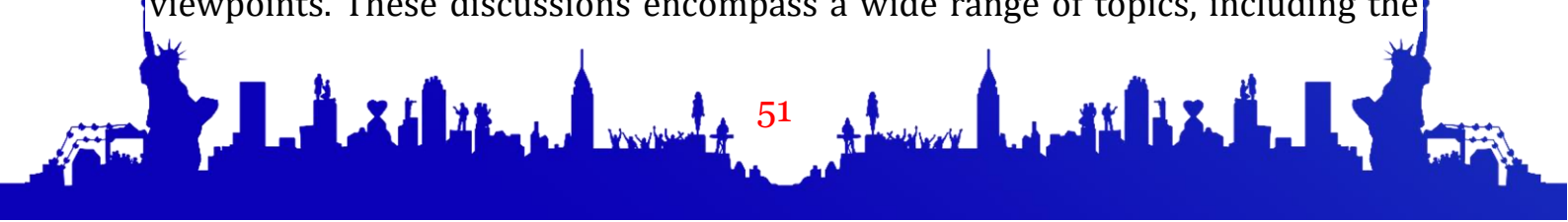


**Critiques and Debates in Modern Turkish Philosophy.** have played a significant role in shaping the essence and direction of philosophical thought within the Turkish intellectual landscape. These debates have revolved around topics such as the relationship between religion and reason, the nature of knowledge, and the role of philosophy within society. Philosophers have engaged in rigorous reviews of traditional worldviews, calling for a rational inquiry into the foundations of belief and proposing new frameworks for understanding reality. These critiques and debates embody the spirit of a progressive and evolving philosophy, paving the way for intellectual and societal transformations.

**Examination of criticisms against the relevance of the human problem.** One common criticism against the relevance of the human problem is that it is too theoretical and detached from the practical concerns of everyday life. Critics argue that spending time and energy discussing abstract philosophical concepts detracts from the pressing societal issues that require immediate attention. They contend that instead of focusing on the essence of human existence, philosophers should be preoccupied with finding practical solutions to problems such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. This viewpoint suggests that the human problem, while academically interesting, fails to address the urgent challenges facing humanity in the modern world.

**Counterarguments defending the importance of addressing the human problem.** Counterarguments defending the importance of addressing the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy can be raised against the notion of its insignificance. Critics may argue that neglecting to address the human problem diminishes the potential for holistic societal development. By acknowledging and exploring human concerns, such as the search for meaning, morality, and identity, philosophers can facilitate a deeper understanding of human experiences and promote a more balanced, just, and harmonious society. Moreover, addressing the human problem can lead to insights that transcend individual boundaries, fostering social empathy and communal cohesion.

**Exploration of ongoing debates within Turkish philosophy regarding this issue.** In light of the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy, an exploration of ongoing debates has emerged. Central to this discussion is the examination of various perspectives regarding the issue at hand. Turkish philosophers have engaged in intense intellectual debates, challenging traditional and contemporary ideas, and presenting alternative viewpoints. These discussions encompass a wide range of topics, including the





nature of human existence, the role of reason, the significance of religion, and the interplay between individual and society. These ongoing debates within Turkish philosophy demonstrate the significance of addressing the human problem in contemporary society.<sup>6</sup>

In contemporary Turkish philosophy, the relevance of the human problem has become a crucial subject of inquiry. Scholars have recognized that human existence and its inherent complexities cannot be overlooked when attempting to understand and address societal issues. This recognition aligns with the broader global philosophical discourse, highlighting the importance of human experiences in the quest for knowledge and understanding. By delving into the human problem, Turkish philosophers strive to shed light on the intricacies of human nature and its impact on the individual, society, and the world at large. Such investigations offer valuable insights into the human condition within the unique cultural and historical context of Turkey, contributing to the wider philosophical conversations on this topic.

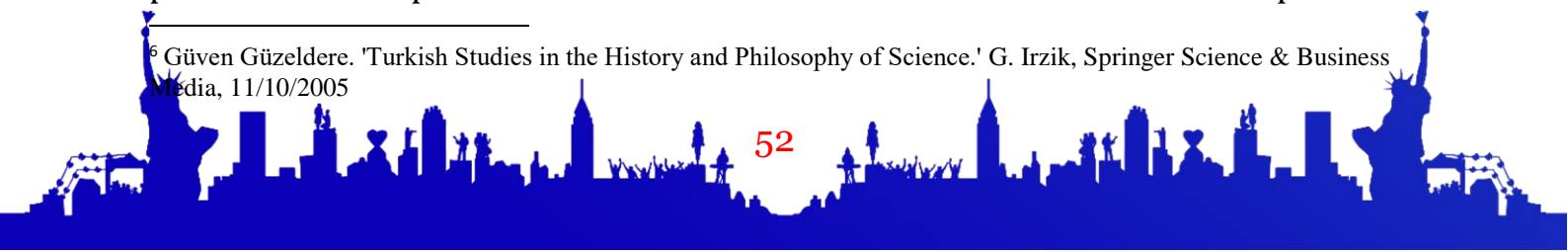
**Conclusion.** In conclusion, the examination of the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy has shed light on the intellectual debates and inquiries that have shaped the trajectory of philosophical thought in Turkey. Through an analysis of various philosophical perspectives, it has become evident that the human problem continues to be a central concern in Turkish philosophical discourse. Moreover, it is clear that these discussions have not only contributed to the development of Turkish philosophy but have also provided valuable insights into the broader questions concerning humanity and its place in the world.

**Recap of the main points discussed in the essay.** In conclusion, this essay examined the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy. The main points discussed included the influence of Western philosophy on Turkish thinkers, the emphasis on the individual's role in society, and the tension between tradition and modernity. Furthermore, the essay highlighted the importance of contextualizing these discussions within the unique socio-political environment of Turkey. By exploring these main points, we can gain a deeper understanding of the continued significance of the human problem in shaping Turkish philosophical thought.

**Emphasis on the continued relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy.** In contemporary Turkish philosophy, there is a pronounced emphasis on the continued relevance of the human problem.

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<sup>6</sup> Güven Güzeldere. 'Turkish Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science.' G. Irzik, Springer Science & Business Media, 11/10/2005



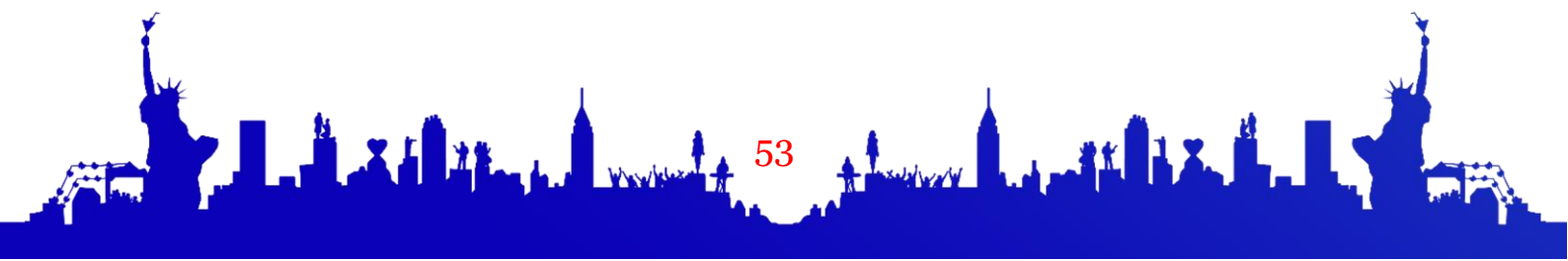


Scholars argue that amidst the rapidly changing global landscape, it is crucial to critically engage with and analyze the dilemmas and challenges faced by humankind. By studying the intricacies of human nature, society, and existence, Turkish philosophers seek to provide meaningful insights into the complex issues that persist in today's world. This focus on the human problem is indicative of a desire to contribute to the greater understanding of human experience and foster intellectual discourse on the pressing matters of our time.

**Call to action for further exploration and engagement with this topic.** In conclusion, the relevance of the human problem in modern Turkish philosophy cannot be undermined. It sheds light on crucial questions surrounding our existence, values, and responsibilities in society. To fully grasp the depth and significance of this topic, it is essential for individuals to actively pursue further exploration and engagement with it. By engaging in dialogue, research, and seeking diverse perspectives, we can enrich our understanding of humanity and contribute to the development of meaningful solutions to contemporary challenges. Only through collective efforts and continuous engagement can we hope to navigate the complexities of the human problem in the context of modern Turkey.

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