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Translating the “West”: The Position of Translated Western Literature within the Turkish Literary Polysystem

TURKEY HAS A VERY RICH TRADITION of translations from various languages. We know that translations from Persian and Arabic into Turkish go back to the pre-Ottoman period in Anatolia in the thirteenth century and continued in the Ottoman period up to the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century (Paker 2002: p. viii). Technical translations from Western languages, mainly from French, started during the eighteenth century when the Turks felt the superior progress of Europe, especially in military equipment and organisation. All these translations played an important role in the transformation of Turkish culture. However, it is generally accepted that (literary) translations from the Western languages played an important role and function in the Turkish modernisation process, as manifested in the form of Westernisation starting in the mid-nineteenth century.

This paper seeks to describe the history of translation in Turkey from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth century, with the aim of seeking out patterns which can shed light on the meanings and implications of translation policies and contribute to a fuller depiction of the socio-cultural context of translation. It is an attempt to recover and analyse the discourses surrounding and constructing historical data in Turkey, especially within the framework of its Westernisation movement¹.

¹ Parts of this paper are based on my book *Translation and Westernisation in Turkey*, Istanbul: Ege, 2004.

My main assumption is that translations from Western literatures were used as the main tool in the modernisation of the Turkish society and that the cultural policies played an important role in this process. The analysis of the major political, social and cultural conditions during the turning points in Turkish history also suggests that the power relations between source and target cultures are critical in determining translational decisions. These power relations also determine the extent and character of the import and transfer of literary goods (Even-Zohar 2002a; 2005). For over a century, the term “West” constituted a model for achievement in Turkey, making up the context and rhetoric of a process of national and cultural self-definition. We might furthermore suggest that Westernisation for the Turks has also meant translating the West.

In the Turkish case, the West as the source culture was given a superior status from as early as the nineteenth century. By the start of the nineteenth century new influences began to enter the Ottoman Empire. Knowledge of French started to increase, educational institutions multiplied, while military and technical works were being translated. Finally, with the promulgation of *Tanzimat* the empire enters a new era². This period can be described as the first conscious Westernisation movement that aims to modernise the Ottoman state and society. Translations played a critical role in this process. It was hoped that Westernisation would bring the Ottoman Empire to the level of European powers and at the same time help it to gain its own Turkish identity. This was a time when the old established models were considered outdated and rejected by the younger generation. New concepts, taken from Europe began to influence first the Ottoman élite by means of contacts that were now established through Ottoman embassies abroad, student missions to Europe, and foreign instructors and teachers invited to the Empire to manage and staff new schools. In this context, it is impossible to isolate the cultural innovations from the social, intellectual, and political milieu of the time.

The first literary translations, shaped parallel to these developments, were made from French into Turkish in 1859, each representing a new

² The *Tanzimat*, meaning “Reorganisation”, which consisted of a number of military, administrative, legal and educational reforms, was officially proclaimed on 3 November 1839 with a decree called *Hatt-ı Hümayun*, or Imperial Rescript, signed by the Sultan and read by Mustafa Reşit Paşa at the square of Gülhane in Istanbul. It continued until 1876 when the first Ottoman constitution was proclaimed and a parliamentary regime was established. Reforms were undertaken to revitalise and to preserve the Ottoman Empire in a world increasingly ordered by European power and civilisation.

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literary genre: Western poetry, philosophical dialogue and the novel are generally regarded as the first step of the literary innovations. İbrahim Şinasi’s translation of French poetry *Tercüme-i Manzume* (Translations of Verse) was in the form of a collection of selected verse from the classic French poets, including La Fontaine, Lamartine, Gilbert, and Racine. Yusuf Kâmil Paşa translated Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* which is considered the first novel to be translated from a Western language into Turkish. The third book translated in 1859 was *Muhaverât-ı Hikemiye* (Philosophical Dialogues) by Münif Efendi. *Muhaverât-ı Hikemiye* consisted of some conversational pieces from Fénelon, Fontenelle and Voltaire³.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar argued that one of the most important reasons for the lack of any innovation in literature in the Islamic, as well as the Ottoman civilisation until the nineteenth century was the absence of literary models (Tanpınar 1988: p. 28). In fact, the foremost impact of the first translations made in this period was in the introduction of new genres, such as novels and drama, from Europe. Following these translations, the first examples of Turkish novels and plays written in the Western style appeared⁴. It should not be surprising to note that the authors of these new works were mainly the translators who produced the first literary translations from the West⁵. The new Turkish literature which arose due to this translation activity differed both in form and in content from classical Ottoman writings. Its source of inspiration and the model for imitation were not the classics of Persia anymore, but French

³ For the translation activity during the *Tanzimat* period, see Paker 1986 and 1991a.

⁴ The birth of the Turkish novel was not accomplished as a result of historical and social factors, but as an import from the West. As a result of this vast translation activity and the introduction of new genres from Europe, the new Turkish literature started to take shape. Ahmet Mithat’s *Kıssadan Hisse* (The Moral of the Story) and *Letaif-i Rivâyat* (Finest Stories) (1870) and Emin Nihat’s *Müsâmeretnâme* (Night Entertainment) (1873-1875) are the first examples of short stories in Western form. The Turkish novel emerged with Şemsettin Sami’s *Taaşuk-ı Talât ve Fitnat* (The Romance of Talat and Fitnat) in 1872. Namık Kemal’s *İntibah* (Awakening) (1876) and *Cezmi* (1880), Recâizade Mahmut Ekrem’s *Araba Sevdası* (Obsession with a Carriage) (1889), SâmîPaşazade Sezâî’s *Sergüzeşt* (Adventure) (1887) and Halit Ziya’s *Nemide* (1889) are some examples which followed. Ahmet Mithat’s *Yeniçeriler* (The Janissaries) (1871) is the first example of the historical novel. Şinasi’s *Şair Evlenmesi* (Marriage of the Poet) (1860) was the first representative of Turkish drama in Western forms.

⁵ To give a significant example, Şinasi, one of the first publishers of the privately owned newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, and the first Turkish writer to translate poetry from French, wrote the first Turkish domestic comedy, *Şair Evlenmesi* (The wedding of a Poet) in the Western tradition which appeared in 1860.

literature. The first translations also helped to familiarise Turkish readers with some aspects of European manners and customs that were otherwise entirely alien to them. It was first of all prose, especially the novel, that attracted a new readership.

The role and function of the press and some institutions of the *Tanzimat* period, which were established in the capital, were enormous in introducing European ideas to the Ottoman society and in generating the first translations from the Western sources. In this period, the press fulfilled an essential role in creating public opinion in relation to political, cultural and literary progress. Newspapers, journals and magazines «functioned as important means of communication, and also started to give much space to translations particularly from French literature» (Demircioğlu 2005: p. 12). As a result, the press helped not only the development of the language by their use of a simple journalistic prose, but also the translated literature in obtaining a primary position in the Ottoman literary polysystem (Berk 2004: p. 43). Similarly, several institutions, such as the Translation Chamber (*Tercüme Odası*), The Academy of Knowledge (*Encümen-i Dâniş*), The Ottoman Scientific Society (*Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye*), played important roles in transferring Western science into Ottoman society and in educating the public through promoting indigenous works and/or translations on science⁶. They also promoted a simple and plain language and style in translations; their publications on language took the first steps towards the Turkification of the language (Berk 2004: p. 30).

All these developments can be examined as part of culture planning. Itamar Even-Zohar's conception of "culture planning" as a "deliberate act of intervention, either by power holders or by 'free agents' into an extant or a crystallizing repertoire" may be helpful to explain the intervention of both the institutions established during the late-nineteenth century, and the translators as "free agents" engaged in planning by means of translation (Even-Zohar 2002b: p. 45). Similarly, Gideon Toury examines translations in relation to the notion of "planning". According to him, translation may serve as a means of literature and culture planning while «planning translation itself [serves] as a carrier of change» (Toury 2002: p. 150). Seen from this perspective, as Cemal Demircioğlu points out, the notion of planning and of agency «opens up a wider vision of translations in Ottoman culture in the late

⁶ In his *Türkiye'de Tercüme Müesseseleri* (Translation Institutions in Turkey), Taceddin Kayaoğlu (1998) offers an extensive review of translation institutions, their members as well as translations they published from the late-eighteenth century up to the republican period.

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nineteenth century» in helping us to «rethink Ottoman culture and literature since the *Tanzimat* period as the subject of struggles between different agents», but also in allowing us to «consider Ottoman writers as agents with certain policies in generating a *new* literature in which translation would introduce new options for renewing Ottoman repertoires» (Demircioğlu 2005: p. 96-97). Finally, the notion of planning can also help us explore the relationships between translations and «the shaping of culture» (Paker 2002: p. vii).

The role of translations in the development of nations and nationalist literatures is, however, not a case unique to the Ottoman target system during the nineteenth century. What is regarded as a period of cultural, economic and political revival in many small nations in Europe especially during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was marked with extensive translation activity and acculturation was used widely as the main strategy in the translation activities of these nations. Particularly when there had been non-standard languages or where languages were newly emerging, there was a deliberate notion of translation as contributing to the culture, hence acculturation. In the case of such revival movements the language was emphasised as the main or the only important form of national existence. Several case studies on the small nations in Europe have looked at acculturation and early nationalism.

During the Czech national revival translations functioned, as Vladimír Macura shows, as the main means in constructing a Czech culture (Macura 1990: p. 64-70; Procházka 1989: p. 57-76). What Anna Lilova calls the period of “Bulgarianization” as «free interpretation and literary revision of the original to suit Bulgarian national, historical and psychological specificities» can probably be seen as an acculturation process, when new models introduced by translations during the Bulgarian renaissance were transformed into national ones (Lilova 1998: p. 351). Sirkku Aaltonen has argued that Irish plays rewritten into Finnish must be seen as products of the Finnish, not the Irish theatrical system due to the acculturation strategy which helped to «blur the borderline between the familiar and unfamiliar and to effect *vraisemblance*» (Aaltonen 1996a: p. 203).

«The role of translation in periods of awakening» was also emphasised by Hilmi Ziya Ülken who argued that translations initiated remarkable rebirths in the intellectual life of various civilisations of the world history. He maintained that translations from the West played significant roles in shifting Turkish civilisation from the East to the West during the *Tanzimat* period and pointed to the significance of an extensive and systematic translation activity in the Republican era,

identified as a period of awakening or a process of enlightenment, in achieving such a change in civilisation. (Ülken 1997: p. 5-6).

Several translation initiatives were taken from the *Tanzimat* period to the Republican era. However, another ‘turning point’ in Turkish history, marked with extensive translation activity, has been the proclamation of the Republic and the political and cultural reforms that took place in the first decades of the Republic. A new, planned and extensive translation activity after the *Tanzimat* could only take shape in this climate. The official translation Bureau established in 1940 conducted perhaps the most productive and influential translation activity in Turkish history, affecting the socio-cultural system, being shaped, at the same time, by political, historical and social developments.

Attempts at creating the modern Turkish nation of the new Turkish Republic, established after the independence struggle against European powers in 1923, were not based on refusing European cultural values, but on loosening ties with Islam and the Eastern world and claiming a place within European culture and civilisation. In this respect, the very foundations of the Republic were mainly translations from the West affecting in every respect socio-cultural life in Turkey. The new identity that the young Republic wanted to create for its people can be summarised as a modern, Europe-oriented and secular society whose members would feel themselves to be primarily Turks. For this purpose, an extensive programme of reforms was carried out in the first decades of the Republic⁷.

⁷ The most characteristic element of the reforms was the secularisation of the state, education, law and social life. With the proclamation of the Republic and the new constitution, the sultanate and caliphate were abolished. In 1928, the second article of the 1924 constitution which made Islam the state religion was annulled. The principle of secularism was inserted into the constitution of 1937. In the first half of 1926 the Swiss civil code and the penal code from Mussolini’s Italy and a commercial code based largely on the German and Italian codes were adopted. With the promulgation of the new civil code, religious marriages and polygamy were abolished. The Municipalities Act of 16 April 1930 gave women the right to vote and to be elected at municipal elections and a law of 5 December 1934 entitling them to vote in national elections for the Grand National Assembly. The adoption of European time and the calendar in 1925, of Western numerals in 1928 and of Western weights and measures (the metric system) in 1931 gave the society a more Westernised image. A number of laws restructuring the banking sector were passed and on 2 July 1934, the Surname Law came into effect. On 29 October 1934, except in the army, all courtesy titles (like *Bey*, *Efendi* or *Paşa*) were abolished. In June 1935 Sunday was made the weekly holiday instead of Friday. Finally, in November 1928, the Arabic script was replaced by Latin letters and the new Turkish alphabet was adopted by Parliament.

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The Translation Bureau (1940-1967), encompassing eminent writer-translators, such as Nurullah Ataç and Sabahattin Eyuboğlu, gave its priority to the translation of ancient Greek and Latin texts and played an important role in the country’s cultural Westernisation attempts. The decision to establish the Translation Bureau was made during the first Turkish Publication Congress held on 1-5 May 1939 by the Ministry of Education. In the opening speech of the Congress, Hasan-Âli Yücel, the Minister of Education declared that the Republican Turkey “which wants to become a distinguished member of Western culture and thought” was obliged to translate “the old and new works of thought of the modern world into its own language and strengthen its identity with their sensitivity and thought” (Ministry 1939: p. 12). Yücel also asserted that such obligation necessitated an extensive translation initiative.

The Translation Committee, one of the seven committees established during the Congress, proposed to the Congress a list of texts to be translated (Ministry 1939: p. 277-85). The report suggested that the number of works in verse should be limited, since such works were considered to be untranslatable. Secondly, it was asked “to give more importance to works belonging to humanist culture while translating” and complete translations from the source languages were recommended (Ministry 1939: p. 126). As a result, the list consisted mainly of Latin and Greek classics which had not been of much interest before. Only seven works of Eastern Literatures were in this list. English, German and Russian literatures had a greater role than in earlier times, but French still maintained its first place. Similarly, all the works suggested for translation in the three separate lists (except Sâdî’s *Gülîstan* in the second list) prepared by the Translation Commission which was set up following the report of the Committee, were chosen from Western literatures.

The Translation Bureau, founded under these circumstances, produced and published over 1000 books between the years 1940-1967 (Tuncor 1989: p. 26-176). Half of these translations were produced between 1940-1946, when the Bureau was still under the monopoly regime⁸ and thus reflected government policies. Among 109 translations accomplished in the first three years 39 were made from ancient Greek, 38 from French, 10 from German, 8 from English, 6 from Latin, 5 from Eastern and Islamic Classics, 2 from Russian and 1 from Scandinavian literature (Çıkar 1997: p. 83). The most translated author during the 1940s was Plato (with 34 books), followed by Molière (26) and Balzac

⁸ I am using the term “monoparty” in preference to “one party” or “single party” following Feroz Ahmad «in order to emphasise the coalescing of party and state in Turkey during the years 1925-1945». See Ahmad 1977: p. 1.

(23). During the 1940s translations of certain classics were prepared with explanatory notes in order to be used in high schools. They included *L'Avare (The Miser)* by Molière, translated by Yaşar Nabi Nayır in 1945; *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, translated by İrfan Şahinbaş in 1946; *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, translated by Orhan Burian in 1945; *Michael Kohlhaas* by Heinrich von Kleist, translated by Necip Üçok in 1946; *Apologia Sokratous (The Apology of Socrates)* by Plato, translated by Niyazi Berkes in 1946; *Revizor (The Government Inspector)* by Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol, translated by Erol Güney and Melih Cevdet Anday in 1946; and *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences (Discourse on Method...)* by René Descartes, translated by Mehmet Karasan in 1947.

Hasan Âli Yücel and his colleagues were convinced that for a Turkish cultural Renaissance a return to Greek and Latin sources was essential. «The roots of civilisation we want to be a part of are in ancient Greek» says Yücel. But he did not see ancient Greeks as aliens. On the contrary, talking about ancient Greek cities that are in Turkey he says: «we should consider ancient Greeks perhaps not as our fellow citizens but our fellow soilmen» (Yücel 1945: p. iii).

Nurullah Ataç (1898-1957), perhaps the most productive translator, essayist and critic in Turkish language during the 1940s and 1950s and an advocate of 'pure Turkish' was a great admirer of the Greco-Roman world. Ataç, in his article entitled *Batı Kafası (Western Mentality)*, claimed that Europeans achieved civilisation by learning Greek and Latin and that in order to grasp this «Western or European mentality» the Turks also had to teach these languages in their schools (Ataç 1988: p. 135-38). Such views were popular among the Bureau members. They believed that technical and social reforms were not enough to create a strong and independent country. There was also a need for a change in intellectual understanding, a need to grasp Western mentality by going back to its sources. In 1940 some high schools opened a "classical branch" where Latin was taught, only to be closed down in 1949.

Similarly, Sabahattin Eyuboğlu (1908-1973) who has been considered, perhaps, the most important representative of the humanist discourse in Turkey, maintained a "Mediterranean culture" where different cultures and civilisations had been dissolved and spread to the rest of the world. If Ataç seeks the "awakening" in Western culture Eyuboğlu looks to popular culture, ancient Anatolian culture. Montaigne, La Fontaine, Shakespeare, Khayyam, Mevlana, Rabelais and Thomas More from whom Eyuboğlu had widely translated, were for him major representatives of humanism sharing the same values, regardless of their

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original cultures. This view was based both on populism and humanism and is also reflected in his perception and language of his translations.

Now we were the conquerors and also had been conquered. [...] We kneaded this soil, but also this soil kneaded us. Because of that, whatever exists on this soil is ours, from the oldest to the newest. Our nation’s history is also the history of Anatolia. Once we worshipped idols, then we became Christians, and then Muslims. It is these peoples who built the temples as well as the churches and the mosques. It was we who filled the caravanserais as we did the snow-white theatres. Countless civilisations and states were born and vanished on our back. We spoke countless languages before we decided on Turkish (Eyuboğlu 1977: p. 11-12, my translation).

Parallel to the dominant ideology of a liberal humanism in other societies, Turks during the 1940s turned their faces to the Greco-Roman world which they saw as the roots of Western civilisation. However, the criteria of this Westernisation process which was also described as Turkish Humanism seem to have been limited with a fragmented Western culture. By going back to the pre-Christian (pagan) period and emphasising the greatness of Western culture liberated from the tyranny of the Church during a period when ‘civilised’ Europe was steeped in bloodshed, the intellectual and cultural course that Western civilisation took from the times of ancient Greek and Romans was omitted. In effect, what all the translators and critics of that period were arguing for, was a notion of an ideal of culture, i.e. a canon, that everyone should aspire to. Translations served as a medium to make these “universal truths and values”, «the best which has been thought and said in the world» accessible (Arnold 1994: p. 5) and helped to “humanise” the selected body of literary texts, the classics, and make them intelligible to the population at large. Liberal humanism was certainly a very strong motivation for translators and writers in the early part of the twentieth century and in its various forms continued to be influential offering the basis for universal standards and concepts in many parts of the world until the late 1960s.

Claiming that the place of the new Turkey was in the Western world, during the first decades of the Republic intellectuals praised the cultural values and norms of the West. It can be argued that by focusing on the ancient Greek civilisation as the roots of Western civilisation, intellectuals of the time aimed to emphasise not the differences, but the similarities with the Western world. Thus, translations from the ancient Greek and Latin helped to create a cultural other, i. e. the West, which was experienced as a superior culture and which, in fact, did not seem so foreign to readers:

The use of a vernacular language in translations was to serve towards the ‘naturalisation’ of the other culture. Using fluent language, translators wanted to present the West as something familiar to the target culture, something that could be learnt easily as it was read. This approach eventually would serve the final aim: the Westernisation of Turkish culture (Berk 2004: p. 160).

Translations from European sources were not the only means of the Westernisation movement; other forms of culture were also imported during these years. The establishment of educational and cultural institutions according to Western models and the role and influence of foreign, i.e. European, experts who were invited to Turkey to set up and run educational and cultural institutions is one of the most significant phenomena of Westernising policies in the cultural field (Berk 2004: p. 118).

In 1933 *Darülfünun* was closed down and recreated under the name of Istanbul University. The developments in Germany on the eve of the Second World War gave the Turkish government the opportunity to invite academics from German universities who were removed from their positions because of their Jewish origin and/or their anti-governmental opinions or activities. Between the years 1933-1945 many professors from Germany, and later from Austria, came to Turkey to replace the old staff of Istanbul University. Some other refugees were commissioned to teach in the newly opened Faculty of Language and History-Geography (*Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi*) in Ankara⁹. Many of these professors established new departments in both universities. Among them there were also many famous names (or names which became famous after their stay in Turkey) in the Humanities departments, such as Hans Reichenbach (philosopher), Leo Spitzer (literary theorist and Romanist), Erich Auerbach (literary historian), Ernst von Aster (historian), Walther Kranz (classical philologist), Wilhelm Peters (psychologist), Helmut Ritter (Orientalist) in Istanbul, Benno Landsberger (Assyriologist), Gustav Güterbock (Hittitologist), Wolfram Eberhard (Sinologist) and Walter Ruben (Indologist) in Ankara.

In 1926 the name of *Darül Elhan* (House of Music) in Istanbul was changed to *Konservatuvar* and not only the name but also the structure of the municipal conservatoire was changed giving more emphasis to Western music. The department of Eastern Music was closed down in 1927. For the establishment of a state conservatoire in Ankara several students were sent to Europe for education. Composer Paul Hindemith

⁹ On the German refugees to Turkey, see also Widmann 1973, Hirsch 1982, and Neumark 1980.

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(1895-1963) was invited as consultant for the establishment of the conservatoire and in the organisation of a musical culture in Turkey in 1935. During the following years Hindemith made other visits to Turkey and at the first entrance examination of the conservatoire in 1936 he was present together with Eduard Zuckmayer and Dr. Ernst Praetorius (1880-1946), the conductor of a newly founded orchestra¹⁰.

The same method was used for the establishment of the theatre department. Carl Ebert (1887-1980) came to Turkey in 1936 to help the founding of performing arts in the conservatoire. Among the many artists who taught at the conservatoire, perhaps the most famous name is Bela Bartok who initiated studies on collecting Turkish folk music.

During the season of 1940-41 opera performances started with extracts from *Tosca* and *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini, followed by *Fidelio* by Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Bartered Bride* (*Satılmış Nişanlı*) by Bedrich Smetana and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (*Figaro'nun Düğünü*) by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The state conservatoire was in close contact with the Translation Bureau where apart from literary works in book form, librettos and theatre plays were produced. During the years 1941-1947, 19 plays were performed at the National Theatre under the direction of Carl Ebert, of which only one was Turkish, whereas the others were translations¹¹.

Between the years 1923-1950 great importance was given to Western institutions of culture, such as orchestras, theatres, ballets, operas etc. Accordingly, performances were to a very large extent Western compositions or translations of Western plays. The emphasis here lies on the fact that during the early years of the Republic (mono-party regime), Western art preoccupied cultural life in Turkey, whereas local (folkloric, Turkish) artistic works were almost absent. Even Ankara Radio was ordered to broadcast Western classical music because Turkish music with its monophonic structure was considered inappropriate for the young Republic. To give an example the percentages of programmes of Ankara

¹⁰ For the German musicians in Turkey, see Zimmermann-Kalyoncu 1985.

¹¹ They were: *Yazılan Bozulmaz* by Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, *La Locandiera* and *La Bottega del Caffè* by Carlo Goldoni, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* by Sophocles, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Les précieuses ridicules* by Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière, *Julius Caesar* and *The Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare, *Our Town* by Thornton Wilder, *Pelleas et Mélisande* and *Intérieur* by Maurice Maeterlinck, *Neodorosl* (*The Minor or The Young Hopeful*) by Denis Ivanovich Fonvizin, *Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Minna von Barnhelm* by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Revizor* (*The Government Inspector*) by Nikolai Gogol, *Riders to the Sea* by John Millington Synge, *Predlozheniye: Shutka v odnom deystvii* (*The Proposal*) by Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, *La Dame de bronze et le monsieur cristal* by Henry Duvernois.

Radio between 1947-50 were as follows: Western classical music 34.70 %, Turkish music 28.05 %, English language course 1.80 %, history 0.97 %, religion 0.30 % (Aktar 1993: p. 51).

All the reforms and developments that took place during the early years of the Republic changed rapidly and immensely the outward appearance of Turkish society. But whether these changes affected all the parts of the country and levels of society is debatable.

Within a few years after World War II, Turkey entered a new era with the multi-party regime and serious changes occurred in the political power relations. However, there was not a radical change in the Westernisation policy as the official ideology, but only alterations and differences in the suggested ways to achieve this goal and Turkey's position vis-à-vis the European Union at the beginning of the twenty-first century is a good evidence of the country's aspiration to be part of the Western world.

Despite the shifts in translational policies with the changed socio-political conditions after the 1950s, translations have always taken an important part in the publishing industry in Turkey. Especially, starting in the 1960s, concomitant with the political conditions of Turkey, an increased number of political and philosophical works have been translated and published. Thus, several literary movements, thoughts and ideologies entered the Turkish cultural and intellectual life via translations. The first decades after World War II witnessed the assertion of a new kind of Turkish identity, and a much more politicised one. This is also when the liberal humanist approach started to be criticised and perceived as élitist by a new generation of intellectuals. Despite the diversity of voices raised in this period, it is nevertheless possible to detect an increase in translations from the Western languages.

Especially after the 1980s, discussions on translation were once again focused on the Western question, i.e. the perception of the West, and the adoption of a policy of resistance was seen as a way of creating a Turkish identity. Many new factors, such as socio-political changes, economic constraints, international developments, and the recognition of cultures instead of the Culture of liberal humanism, challenged the old *status quo* in the whole target cultural system. Turkey has also started to question many accepted Western notions of cultural identity, such as 'humanism', 'universalism' and the so-called 'Grand Narratives' of the Western cultural tradition¹². Consequently, rejection of the Western paradigm of

¹² This questioning process is similar to the decolonisation one which former colonies have been undergoing. See, for example, Mehrez 1992 and Carbonell 1996.

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modernisation was one of the hallmark movements starting in the late 1980s. The only Western element in the new ideologies (Islam, radical nationalism etc.) was advocacy of the adoption of Western technology and science.

The changing socio-political power relations in Turkey also affected the perception of the West. For over a century, the term “West” constituted a model for achievement, making up the context and rhetoric of a process of national and cultural self-definition. However, the generation after World War II started to seek new models and a new identity. As a result, different opinions on the “Western” and “Turkish” identities started to take shape. Since the mid-1980s, however, the range models followed by the Turkish system have widened. More importantly, Turks have started to evaluate and redefine themselves not only against the West but also against other cultures, such as Latin American and Islamic.

Since the early 1980s, a wide range of translations of international literature, from prizewinning fiction to popular bestsellers, as well as other translations in the fields of social sciences, history, philosophy, psychology, gender studies and children’s literature have been published. At the same time, the publishing industry has taken a less Eurocentric appearance, thanks to a wider selection of translated texts. The source languages and cultures of translations have been broadened allowing readers to have access to a wider literary scene. A bookfair, opened in Istanbul in 1982, attracted enormous interest among the general public and became a growing annual event inspiring, at the same time, the organisation of similar bookfairs in other cities. Following this revival in the quantity and diversity of translated literature, a similar revival of Turkish literature is to be witnessed especially after 1984. One of the phenomena of the 1980s was the emergence of a feminist discourse which began to take shape under a growing number of «women’s statements on women’s politics, to consciousness-raising articles and activities, to academic writing in the social sciences, and also, though indirectly, to a covertly concerned body of women’s weeklies and journals of much wider circulation» (Paker 1991b: p. 271). As Saliha Paker has noted, one can say that feminism is, in one way or another, becoming prominent in non-fiction, which no doubt has been nourished by «the growing corpus of translations of feminist classics from Mary Wollstonecraft’s works to Simone de Beauvoir’s and of major contemporary Western and Middle Eastern feminist texts» (Paker 1991b: p. 271). Paker has also noted that “one of the principle reasons for founding the group *Kadın Çevresi* (Women’s Circle) in 1984 was to ensure the active involvement of women in the translation and publication of such texts” and argued that in this

respect, the Women's Circle has served «as the main link with international women's movements and feminism [...] and has therefore been primarily responsible for creating a platform for the discussion of feminist issues» (Paker 1991: p. 271-72)¹³. Parallel to these developments, literary works, especially novels and short stories, dealing with issues centering women and produced by a new generation of Turkish women writers have increased dramatically after the 1980s¹⁴.

The depoliticisation process of the 1980s, as one can argue, may have had some positive effects on Turkish literature. The Turkish novel, and literature in general, with a range of new viewpoints, beliefs, settings, situations and ideologies, became more diversified after the 1980s. This development has been due not only to the liberation of literature from ideology, but to the increasing pluralism in Turkish society. With the emergence of new political ideologies and multiple identities the outlook of Turkish literature, especially after the 1960s, was heavily politicised and the same procedure, i.e. seeing the authors' works from a political rather than a literary perspective, was also common in the Turkish context. In this respect, one can furthermore argue that the process of liberation of Turkish literature from ideology, as well as its development towards a genuine national narrative took shape only after the 1980s. With the diversity of genres, forms and techniques, new Turkish literature could develop a synthesis of its own heritage and acquired elements. In this respect, it should not be surprising to see that beginning in the 1980s works, especially novels by contemporary Turkish authors like Latife Tekin and Orhan Pamuk, have been translated into English and also other Western languages and praised for their literary values¹⁵. Likewise, the increasing number of books written by women and by

¹³ Another important development has been the establishment of the first *Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi* in Istanbul in 1990. The library contains books and journals written by or on women.

¹⁴ Aysel Özakın (b. 1942) with her *Genç Kız ve Ölüm* (Istanbul: Yazko, 1980); trans. by Celia Kerslake as *The Prizegiving* (London: The Women's Press, 1988), Nazlı Eray (b. 1945) and Latife Tekin (b. 1957) with their "fantastic" or "magical" narratives, such as *Yoldan Geçen Öyküler* (Stories Strolling by) (Istanbul: Can, 1987) and *Aşk Artık Burada Oturmuyor* (Love Doesn't Live Here Anymore) (Istanbul: Can, 1989); and *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (Istanbul: Adam, 1984); trans. by Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker under the title *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (London: Marion Boyars, 1993) and *Gece Dersleri* (Night Lessons) (Istanbul: Adam, 1986) respectively, have been among the main women writers who challenged mainstream fiction in the 1980s.

¹⁵ For a review and list of translated Turkish literature in English see Berk 2000 and Paker 2004.

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authors of other ethnic and religious origins¹⁶, and the appearance of journals and newspapers published by such groups invigorated the Turkish publishing sector.

The picture which appeared after the 1980s offers a variety of opportunities to evaluate the plurality in all aspects of Turkish life. This plurality that Turkish society witnessed has, as Kevin Robins noted, “nothing to do with cultural reversion (to tradition, religion, or whatever), as many Western commentators like to believe”. On the contrary, “the proliferation of Islamic publications, the growing recognition of ethnic heterogeneity, the increasing references to the Ottoman past, are all about the real Turkey reasserting itself against official and state culture” (Robins 1996: p. 72). In fact, one can see this recognition of plurality in Turkish society as a response to the failure of previous ideologies which sought a national identity in the Western world. Translation policies and strategies in these periods should therefore be studied and analysed within this context. We might argue that the publishing sector has been affected and repositioning itself according to the changing cultural and political climate, especially in this so-called globalisation era. In this respect, historical-descriptive and systemic studies of translations in Turkish culture in the last twenty years are needed to reveal the socio-political and cultural changes that Turkey has experienced in this period.

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¹⁶ For the first time a Jewish author, Mario Levi, received one of the prestigious literary awards, the 1990 Haldun Taner Short Story Award with his volume of novellas: *Bir Şehre Gidememek* (Unable to Go to a City).

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