

VISIBILITY OF TRANSLATION THROUGH CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES:
THE "ISLAMIC" RETRANSLATIONS OF "100 ESSENTIAL READINGS"

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Thesis Abstract

Esra Birkan Baydan, "Visibility of Translation through Conflicting Ideologies:
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This study has two purposes which are interrelated: 1) to highlight a case as an example of translation's role in culture planning struggles of opposing groups or competing ideologies; 2) to approach the issue of visibility from a different perspective. I argue that translation can also gain visibility through competing cultural planning activities governed by conflicting ideologies and this case presents an example to my argument.

The case presented here concerns the repercussions of the translations of Western classics recommended by the Ministry of Education to the primary schools in Turkey. The Ministry's list of "100 Essential Readings" includes thirty Western classics as well as original products of the Turkish literary system. As this created a huge market and no copyright obligations restrained the publishers, several of them published retranslations of the Western classics, among which certain translations were criticized for being ideologically distorted. This situation was brought to the attention of the public by a national newspaper in the summer of 2006 and the discussions around this issue have contributed to the visibility of translation. This case presents a good opportunity not only for analyzing the discourse about translation in the public but also for expanding on the existing notions of culture planning, power relations, ideology and visibility in translation studies.

Tez Özeti

Esra Birkan Baydan, "Çatışan İdeolojiler Üzerinden Çevirinin Görünürlük Kazanması: '100 Temel Eserin' 'İslami' Çevirileri"

Bu çalışmanın birbiriyle ilintili iki amacı vardır: 1) karşıt grupların veya birbiriyle rekabet halindeki ideolojilerin kültürel planlama mücadelelerinde çevirinin oynadığı role örnek olarak bir vakayı aydınlatmak; 2) çevirinin görünürlüğü konusuna başka bir perspektiften yaklaşmak. Bu çalışmada, çatışan ideolojiler tarafından belirlenen ve birbiriyle rekabet halindeki kültürel planlama etkinlikleri yoluyla da çevirinin görünürlük kazanabileceği öne sürülmektedir. Burada anlatılan vaka bu iddiaya örnek oluşturmaktadır.

Vaka, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından Türkiye'deki ilkokullara tavsiye edilen Batı klasiklerinin çevirileri etrafındaki tartışmalarla ilgilidir. Bakanlığın '100 Temel Eser' listesi Türk yazınsal dizgesi içindeki özgün yapıtların yanı sıra otuz Batı klasiğini de içermektedir. Bu durum yayıncılar açısından büyük bir piyasa anlamına geldiği için ve onları sınırlayan bir telif durumu söz konusu olmadığından, pek çok yayınevi Batı klasiklerinin yeniden çevirilerini yayımladı ve bu çevirilerin bir kısmı ideolojik çarpıtmadan ötürü eleştirildi. Bu konu 2006 yılının Haziran ayında ulusal bir gazete tarafından kamunun gündemine taşındı ve ilgili tartışmalar çevirinin görünürlük kazanmasını sağladı. Yalnızca halk arasındaki çeviriyle ilgili söylemi incelemek açısından değil, aynı zamanda çeviribilim alanında kültürel planlama, güç ilişkileri, ideoloji ve görünürlük hakkındaki mevcut fikirleri açmak ve ötesine geçmek açısından da, bu vaka iyi bir fırsat sunmaktadır.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2006, translation was carried to the headlines of one of the major national newspapers in Turkey, *Radikal*. The news was about the (re)translations of the Western classics recommended by the Ministry of Education to primary schools in Turkey. The Ministry of Education had recommended a reading list consisting of a hundred essential readings, thirty of which were Western classics listed under the heading of world literature. This meant a huge market of millions of copies for publishers. As a result, copies of the listed books were re-published by various publishers with an indication that they were “recommended by MEB (the Ministry of Education)”. Publishers had no obligations mainly for two reasons. First, there are no copyright problems since all of the books in the list are classics dating back almost to a hundred years. Secondly, although they are free to have the indication “recommended by MEB” on the books, this does not mean that the books are actually subject to any inquiry of content by the Ministry of Education or any organs within the Ministry such as *Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu*, TTK (Board of Education).

After several versions of translations of the world classics started to appear on the market some of them were criticized for being “ideologically distorted”, by certain circles, due to the use of language in them, which was considered to be inscribed by an Islamic discourse. This led to a series of discussions revolving around the issue of ideology in translation, which in turn made translation highly visible in society. The Minister of Education,

Hüseyin Çelik, publishers, translators, journalists, columnists, researchers of children's literature and other scholars were involved in this discussion.

It was the first time that the role of ideology in translation was recognized this clearly in the Turkish public sphere. However, the fact that translation can be (and is) an ideological activity was a subject of resentment for those who would expect a translated text to be a faithful copy or an exact replica of the "original". They expressed their opinions about "fidelity to the original" and "ethics of translation" in relation with each other. Their opinion about translation ethics is mainly based on the notion of "fidelity to the original". These discussions reveal a great deal of the public opinion about translation.

This case presents a good opportunity for: (1) analyzing the discourse about translation in the public and (2) expanding on the notions of power relations, ideology and visibility in translation studies. The present study is an attempt to problematize the "Islamic" retranslations of "100 Essential Readings" under the light of Translation Theory. I intend to highlight this case as an example of translation's role in the culture planning struggles of opposing groups or competing ideologies and to approach the issue of visibility from a different perspective. I argue that translation can also gain visibility through competing cultural planning activities governed by conflicting ideologies. Therefore, I approached the case from two perspectives which are interrelated: (1) translation as a site of cultural planning struggles of two competing ideologies and (2) conditions serving the visibility of translation.

The first perspective is supported by a theoretical framework of definitions of ideology, and work on ideology and cultural planning that has

been carried out in the field of translation studies. The second perspective is supported by a review of the work that has been carried out on the visibility of translation so far, in order to benefit from the existing notions as well as expanding on what has already been said about this issue. The outline of the study is as follows:

The first chapter is an introduction to the case studied here. It poses the originating question of this study and significance of this case from the perspective of Translation Theory. My approach to this case and the theoretical framework which supports it are also defined in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the definitions of ideology and arrives at the notion that “all of our thinking is ideological” based on Eagleton’s views. In this sense, language use is always inscribed by one’s own ideology. Thus, there can be no ideology-free translation. The expectancy of a translation with no bearing of ideology is a false one and, it can be interpreted as an expectation of a translation bearing one’s own ideology rather than “theirs”. By linking translational norms with ideology, I conclude that ideology in translation is only traceable if competing ideologies dictate separate translational norms.

The third chapter reviews the focus on ideology in translation studies in further detail and tackles the ideas of Levefere and Venuti to provide a theoretical framework for a discussion of the role of ideology in translation. The notions of power, ideology, institution, patronage and poetics elaborated by Lefevere in line with the systems-approach to literature borrowed from Russian Formalists draw our attention to the “manipulative” nature of translation whereas Venuti’s poststructuralist approach to translation enables

us to view translation as a site of power relations which constitute and/or challenge the dominant cultural values and interests. Translation is always put in the service of various cultural, economic and political agendas. The underlying aims or interests in any act of translation are always ideological.

The fourth chapter deals with Even-Zohar and Toury's ideas on culture planning, the means and ways of implementing a cultural repertoire and struggles for domination to gain a better understanding of "Islamic society engineering" – a term used to denote the cultural planning activities of the Islamicists – and the power struggles in a polarized society. We observe two-way cultural planning in Turkey. There are attempts to spread the Islamist ideology to gain more power. There are also attempts to ensure the survival of the laicist ideology to sustain power. These two groups with conflicting ideologies strive to implement their own models to govern the organization of life in all aspects in order to obtain or sustain power. Translation, in this case, becomes the battleground of two conflicting ideologies.

The fifth chapter presents a literature review of what has already been said about the visibility of translation to display that this case study adds a new dimension. This issue is often approached from the opposite angle, i.e. the invisibility of translation. Translation scholars associate the invisibility of translation with its secondary status. Theoretically, this status emanates from the ideology of originality, which has been tackled in translation studies under the influence of postmodernism, poststructuralism and deconstruction. However, practically, translation is still an invisible practice and translation scholars suggest ways to overcome invisibility in practice.

The sixth chapter provides the political background of Turkey for the evaluation of the case and gives many examples of “Islamic society engineering”. The discussions around “100 Essential Readings” were in fact a continuation of an earlier power struggle between two groups who seem to be in constant conflict in Turkish society; namely, the Laicists and the Islamists. When we examine the discourse in the media around this issue we find that this situation is perceived as “polarization” in society. Therefore, I use the term “polarization” not as an *essential* reality but as a methodological tool which will enable us to analyze the case within a theoretical framework. Furthermore, it is important to note here that, polarization situated along the axis of laicist and Islamist poles, in this study, only reflects the political discourse to discuss its implications on the public discourse about translation and the reactions concerning the ideological distortion in translation. This political discourse is aimed at creating the impression in the public that especially laicism is under the protection of certain circles such as the leading opposition party, military forces and the judicial members of the state. A further political discussion should be carried out within the theoretical framework of Political Science¹ as it exceeds both the aims of this study and my capabilities. I should also note that, quotations from the newspapers in this study are selected among those which reflect the populist political discourse for the same reasons mentioned above. With these points in mind, for methodological reasons, we need to assume that one of the ideologies in this polarized state is the “dominant” one. The dominant ideology in this case would be laicism², since it is the formal ideology of the state and this is clearly stated in the Constitution. In this case, Islamist ideology would be the

“reactionary” ideology. The fact that Islamist ideology is now backed economically, culturally and politically might have led to further polarization in society. Indeed, the polarization in society has been even more visible especially after AKP (Justice and Development Party), considered a moderate Islamist party, became the ruling party and CHP (Republican People’s Party), considered to be the defender of laicism, became the opposing party in the parliament in 2002. It was the first two-party parliament since 1954. This is mentioned here in order to emphasize the polarized state of Turkey. In fact, these were the only parties that gained seats in the parliament out of a total of 18 contenders. The rest of the parties failed to pass the 10 percent threshold – a remnant of the military coup of 1980 – to be eligible to gain parliamentary seats. Thus, it was an artificial two-party parliament and it did not reflect the totality of the votes.

The seventh chapter gives a review of the repercussions of the “Islamic” translations of “100 Essential Readings” to reveal the discourse on translation in the public. The use of language in the translation of world classics is considered to be inscribed by an Islamic discourse and criticized as ideological distortion. Ideology is placed at the opposite end of the unbeatable notion of “faithfulness” – ideology being on the negative and faithfulness on the positive side.

The final chapter presents the findings of this case study and its contribution to Translation Studies, with the expectation that a further discussion of ethics on this subject can be carried out from here onwards.

¹For an evaluation and discussion in Political Science, see Parla and Davison (2004), Kaplan (1999), Kaplan (2005).

² See Appendix A for an explanation of the term “laicism” as opposed to “secularism”.

CHAPTER II

IDEOLOGY

Ideological Distortion

Eagleton sets off by discussing various definitions of ideology in circulation and draws attention to the contradictions among them. He notes that “[o]n several of these definitions, nobody would claim that their own thinking was ideological” (1991: 2). Van Dijk illustrates this point as follows: “Ours is the Truth, Theirs is the Ideology” (in Pérez, 2003: 4). Therefore defining any belief or value system as ideological is established from an ideological perspective. Eagleton explains this as such: “Ideology, like halitosis, is in this sense what the other person has” (1991: 2). This means that when we come across thinking that is different from ours we tend to label it as ideology without realizing that our own thinking is also ideological. According to Eagleton, when we examine the discourse of ideology “in-the-street” we find out that “[t]o claim in ordinary conversation that someone is speaking ideologically is surely to hold that they are judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts their understanding” (ibid).

From the perspective of translation, therefore, to say that a translation is ideologically distorted is to claim that the source text is not only perceived “through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas” (Eagleton 1991: 2) but its rendering into the target language is also distorted or problematic. It might be said that, the expectancy of a translation with no bearing of ideology is

inherent in this judgement at the first glance. Nevertheless, as Eagleton contends, marking any discourse as ideologically distorted is ideological in itself. Therefore, we might conclude that, those who claim that a translation is ideologically distorted are also speaking through the framework of their own ideologies, for, according to Eagleton, “[t]here is no such thing as presuppositionless thought, and to this extent all of our thinking might be said to be ideological” (1991: 3-4). If we accept that there is no ideology-free translation, the expectancy of an ideology-free translation can be interpreted as the will of a translation bearing *my* ideology and not *theirs*. The following section demonstrates how ideology and translation are closely interlinked.

Translation: A Site of Ideological Encounters

In parallel to Eagleton’s view that “all of our thinking might be said to be ideological” (1991: 3-4), Pérez indicates that, “[a]ll language use is, [...], ideological” and concludes that “translation itself is always a site of ideological encounters” (2003: 2). Thus, translation, which is as old as humankind, has always been closely related to ideology. Pérez quotes from Fawcett to illustrate this point:

[T]hroughout the centuries, individuals and institutions have applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation. (Fawcett in Pérez, 1998: 107).

Ranging from the Middle Ages to the present day, Fawcett’s chosen cases show that translations have been ideological simply by existing (like Ælfric’s transfer of *The Life of the Saints*); by being subjected to various forms of (religious) creeds, which ultimately took translators to be burnt at the stake or to be threatened (and killed) by notorious *fatwas*; or by echoing all sorts of

value-related messages such as Marxism. (Pérez 2003: 2)

Examples which demonstrate the manifestation of ideology in translation abound throughout history. Ideology not only manifests itself within the language used in translation but also stamps its mark on the selection of texts to be translated and on the use to which the translated texts are put.

Linking Norms with Ideology

In this sense, ideology becomes a tool for power. Those who manage to spread their ideologies the most and convince others that theirs is the best are surely to gain more power in society. Eagleton stresses this issue from the point of view of "*legitimizing* the power of a dominant social group or class" (1991: 5). Eagleton defines six strategies for the legitimization of dominant power:

promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, (...); and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself. (1991: 5-6)

Norms in a society in general and translation norms in particular might be said to serve these strategies. Toury defines norms as intersubjective factors occupying the "vast middle-ground" between the two extremes of socio-cultural constraints designated as absolute rules and pure idiosyncrasies (1995: 54). Norms dictate what kind of translation strategies to adopt at a particular time and place. In other words, norms become tools of *naturalizing* and *universalizing* beliefs and values which are part of the ideology of a

dominant power, at the same time however, they are utilized for *denigrating* and *excluding* rival forms of thought. As a result our thinking of translation in general and our judgement of any translated text in particular is highly governed by the dominant translational norms in a society. Toury borrows the concept of norms from sociology:

Sociologists and social psychologists have long regarded norms as the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into performance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension. (1995: 54-55)

However, there is another dimension to it also emphasized by Toury and further elaborated in his article on culture planning.

It is not at all that rare to find side by side in a society three types of competing norms, each having its own followers and a position of its own in the culture at large: the ones that dominate the center of the system, and hence direct translational behaviour of the so-called *mainstream*, alongside the remnants of *previous* sets of norms and the rudiment of *new* ones, hovering in the periphery. (1995: 62-63)

In other words, norms not only serve the dominant ideology but also competing ideologies hovering alongside the so-called mainstream.

Eagleton also points out that one cannot necessarily relate ideology to legitimating the power of a dominant group. One of the reasons is that “not every body of belief which people commonly term ideological is associated with a *dominant* political power” (1991: 6). Rather, he poses ideology as a challenge to or confirmation of a particular social order, thereby widening the scope of the term ideology. Thus, it becomes possible to suggest that there are always competing ideologies in any given period and in any society, just as there are competing translational norms. Consequently, focusing on the

discourse on translation gives us clues about the competing translational norms, considering that this discourse is also governed by ideology.

Ideology: "Interested Discourse"

However, widening the scope of ideology as such should not connote that "everything is ideological" (Eagleton 1991: 8). In this sense, ideology becomes "a matter of 'discourse' rather than 'language'" (9). Thus, Eagleton attracts our attention to the "discursive context" (1991: 9). "Ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes" (ibid). Ideology is then "a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context" (ibid). Therefore when we consider the issue of translation certain uses of language stand out as ideological, firstly within the relationships of competing norms, secondly against the backdrop of ideological conflicts within the society at large. To illustrate, translating 'God' as *Allah* is considered ideological from another ideological perspective because of the norm of translating 'God' in Christian contexts as *Tanrı*, which is indeed a reflection of the conflict between laicist and Islamist ideologies; whereas using expressions with the *Allah* words and phrases in them in other contexts or in daily language does not necessarily reflect a religious ideology.

In line with this argument, Eagleton tends to describe ideology as "interested discourse", by which he means not the "individual kinds of interest" but "the interests of specific social groups" (1991: 10). In this sociological sense, ideology serves "as the medium in which men and

women fight out their social and political battles at the level of signs, meanings and representations” (ibid, 11). Eagleton makes use of Habermas’ definition of ideology as “systematically distorted communication” and argues that “in order to be able to decipher an ideological system of discourse, we must already be in possession of the normative, undistorted use of terms” (ibid, 14). However, if we are to assume norms to be in constant competition with each other it follows that an ideological discourse is only recognizable or decipherable within a power struggle of norms governed by conflicting ideologies. Consequently, we are not in possession of a normative, undistorted use of terms. In other words, perceiving a discourse as ideologically distorted depends on one’s own ideological perspective, hence it is relative. Eagleton makes a similar remark: “To say that the statement is ideological is then to claim that it is powered by an ulterior motive bound up with the legitimation of certain interests in a power struggle” (1991: 16). Thus, ideology can only be recognized within the context of opposing ideologies, i.e. a power struggle. The same argument applies to translation as well. Ideology in translation is only traceable if competing ideologies dictate separate translational norms.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY IN TRANSLATION

The Focus on Ideology in Translation Studies

The role of ideology in translation has long been acknowledged in translation studies. Tymoczko and Gentzler suggest that using “mass communications for cultural control” (2002: xi) dates back to the 1950s and 1960s with a headstart by the United States from where it spread throughout the world.

This influenced the practice of translation as well.

[P]racticing translators began consciously to calibrate their translation techniques to achieve effects they wished to produce in their audiences, whether those effects were religious faith, consumption of products, or literary success. In short, translators began to realize how translated texts could manipulate readers to achieve desired effects. (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: xi)

Tymoczko and Gentzler attract our attention to the historical events, such as the breakup of colonial empires, opposition to the Vietnam War, and activities of the 1968 generation, that “deepened the understanding of power as a motivating factor in cultural domains” (ibid, xii). Since then interest in structures of power in societies has accelerated with changes throughout the world such as the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, and with movements such as the rise of postcolonialism, and the globalization of the economies and cultures of the world (cf., ibid).

The act of translation cannot be considered independently from historical developments and culture. Therefore translation studies took an interest in power in parallel to these developments. According to Tymoczko

and Gentzler, the publishing of *The Manipulation of Literature* in 1985 was the beginning of a new stage in translation studies. It was an anthology edited by Theo Hermans, with the contributions of Gideon Toury, José Lambert, Raymond van den Broeck, André Lefevere, Susan Bassnett and Maria Tymoczko among others. They argued that

translations, rather than being secondary and derivative, were instead one of the *primary* literary tools that larger social institutions – educational systems, arts councils, publishing firms, and even governments – had at their disposal to “manipulate” a given society in order to “construct” the kind of “culture” desired. (Tymoczko and Gentzler 2002: xiii)

This anthology is of importance not only because it highlights the impact of social institutions and governments on the “manipulation” of translation but also because it provides insight into the “manipulation” at work in translation from countries as varied as Israel, Belgium, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Another pivotal work which focused on the power relations in translation was *Translation, History and Culture*, written by André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett. In the introduction Lefevere and Bassnett point out the “cultural turn” in translation studies and emphasize that

[t]ranslations are never produced in the airlock where they, and their originals, can be checked against the *tertium comparationis* in the purest possible lexical chamber, untainted by power, time, or even the vagaries of culture. Rather, translations are made to respond to the demands of a culture, and of various groups within that culture. (1990: 7)

This was in fact a call to stop evaluating translations against their source texts in a vacuum, but to consider them within the cultural context where translation is inevitably “manipulated” in line with the dynamics of society.

Gentzler, in his foreword to *Constructing Cultures*, a compilation of essays written by Bassnett and Lefevere and published after Lefevere's death, mentions that this was "a real breakthrough for the field of translation studies" because "[i]t was then that translation studies officially took the 'cultural turn'" (1998: xi).

Lefevere published three books in 1992, including *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. They were within the strand of descriptive studies and from a systems approach to literature. However, as stated by Tymoczko and Gentzler, "after the cultural turn, publications in translation studies that dealt with questions of power increasingly had a poststructuralist basis" (2002: xiv). Furthermore, it might be argued that poststructuralist thinking, later followed by postcolonial studies in translation, has foregrounded "ideology" rather than "culture". According to Pérez, the focus on ideology "encourage[s] greater 'critical thinking'" (2003: 6).

Venuti, in his anthology entitled *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, published in the same year with Lefevere's *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, employed a poststructuralist approach to the scrutiny of translation by challenging the originality of the foreign text against the poststructuralist concept of textuality. As a result, a further step was taken with poststructuralist approaches appearing on the scene. After the idealistic notion of "equivalence" that had been sought between the source and target texts for centuries was abandoned by descriptive and systemic approaches, poststructuralist

approaches even questioned the idea of “originality” of the source text.

Venuti, in his introduction, suggests that

The originality of the foreign text is thus compromised by the poststructuralist concept of textuality. Neither the foreign text nor the translation is an original semantic unity; both are derivative and heterogeneous, consisting of diverse linguistic and cultural materials which destabilize the work of signification, making meaning plural and differential, exceeding and possibly conflicting with the intentions of the foreign writer and the translator. (1992: 7)

Venuti wrote *The Translator's Invisibility* in 1995 and *The Scandals of Translation* in 1998, both of which dealt with issues of power. Questions of power were thus brought to the fore and the “cultural turn” in translation studies later evolved into a “power turn” as suggested by Tymoczko and Gentzler (cf. 2002: xvi).

The statement made by Tymoczko and Gentzler for the way in which translation and translators are regarded within the field of translation studies serves as a good concluding remark for this section:

Translation thus is not simply an act of faithful reproduction but, rather, a deliberate and conscious act of selection, assemblage, structuration, and fabrication – and even, in some cases, of falsification, refusal of information, counterfeiting, and the creation of secret codes. In these ways translators, as much as creative writers and politicians, participate in the powerful acts that create knowledge and shape culture. (2002: xxi)

The present case study provides a good example for the way in which selected and translated texts have been put to the service of a particular ideology, represented by the government and the Ministry of Education, so as to shape culture and to challenge other dominant forms of ideological thinking. Translation is thus viewed as a site where different ideologies meet and compete within the same society.

As ideological issues are the major topic of this study the following two sections deal with Lefevere and Venuti's approaches in further detail to provide a theoretical framework. Lefevere, in his effort to describe the system with its power relations, assumes a neutral standpoint whereas Venuti judges certain translation practices as "assimilative" and takes an opposing stance against them. Robinson makes the following remark:

Set side by side with the overt political (left-leaning) polemics of Venuti, Lefevere's neutrality looks unmistakably like a whitewash of systemic hegemony, a refusal to indict political power wherever it appears. (1997: 39)

We need to bear in mind the weaknesses and pitfalls in these scholars' thinking and approach their ideas critically. For instance, Tymoczko and Gentzler warn us against "an uncritical application of power dichotomies" (2002: xviii). In other words, there is a tendency to view the position of translation as an "either/or situation" (ibid). However, "as a site where discourses meet and compete translation negotiates power relations" (xix). Another criticism concerns the systems theory. Robinson draws our attention to the "serious flaws" in systems theory. Although Robinson acknowledges the use of systems-thinking in "understanding, and thus mentally controlling, large quantities of external data" (1997: 41) and its power in "analyzing (and indicting) recurring social patterns" (42), he criticizes systems-thinking for its "high level of abstraction, which necessarily neglects the variety and creativity of personal experience" (ibid, 42). To conclude, no theory of translation can serve all political contexts and historical specificities³,

³ See, for example, Arrojo (1998).

because each case contains certain features that make it unusual and unique in many ways. Yet, we can benefit from both systemic and poststructuralist approaches in explaining certain aspects of the case presented here.

André Lefevere

In *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, Lefevere addresses the issues of power, ideology, institution, patronage and poetics at length by providing case studies. He elaborates his notion of the role of ideology in translation in line with the systems-approach to literature borrowed from Russian Formalists especially “because it provides a neutral, non-ethnocentric framework for the discussion of power and relationships shaped by power” (1992: 10). For this reason, he argues that “contrary to traditional opinion, translation is not primarily “about” language (57). From this point onwards, he directs our attention to the manipulative nature of translation rather than “the vexed question of “fidelity” and “freedom” in translation” (51). For him, “[f]aithfulness is just one translational strategy that can be inspired by the collocation of a certain ideology with a certain poetics” and “[to] exalt it as the only strategy possible, or even allowable, is as utopian as it is futile” (ibid). Yet, this outmoded notion of faithfulness which has been discarded for being useless for a discussion of any translation practice still rules in the public sphere, as will be observed in the seventh chapter, *Repurcussions of the “Islamic” Translations of “100 Essential Readings”*. Viewing translations as “manipulated” texts governed by a certain ideology

leads to more productive discussions and offers a more fruitful area of research. Therefore the framework laid out by Lefevere is highly beneficial for a consideration of this case.

Lefevere positions translations within a broader perspective that he calls "rewriting". According to Lefevere, historiography, anthologization, criticism and editing as well as translation are all forms of rewriting and "[r]ewriting manipulates" (1992: 9), because rewriters act in accordance with a certain ideology. He traces rewriting back to St. Augustine, who suggested that some passages in the Bible should be "interpreted, "rewritten," until they could be made to correspond to the teachings of the Church" (ibid, 7). Rewriters act in accordance with a certain ideology because they occupy "a certain position within a certain institution" (ibid). They "occupy positions at courts, in educational institutions, and in publishing houses" (ibid). In the present case, translators and publishers who published the "Islamic translations" and others who reacted to them are all "rewriters" whose conflicting ideologies are governed by various institutions.

Systems-thinking enables the researcher to view literature as "a "contrived" system, because it consists both of texts (objects) and human agents who read, write and rewrite texts" (Lefevere 1992: 12) on the one hand, and involves recognizing "a culture, a society [as] the environment of a literary system" (14) on the other hand. "The literary system and the other systems belonging to the social system as such are open to each other: they influence each other" (ibid). In line with this view, it is not possible to evaluate the Islamic translations of Western classics in isolation from the

developments in the social system in Turkey, an issue which is dealt with in the sixth chapter, The “Islamic” Retranslations of “100 Essential Readings”.

The case of the classics gains another dimension through systems-thinking connected with Lefevere’s notion of “rewriting”. The classics were written once but they are being continuously rewritten so that they can fit in with “the dominant poetics or ideology of a given time and place” (Lefevere 1992: 13). In line with this view, Tymoczko concludes that “[b]ecause of the necessity of renewing translations, translation is a cultural function that ultimately resists the fetishizing of cultural objects and cultural constructs” (2000: 43). Lefevere maintains that “it is quite common for the classics to be presented as suited to different ideologies and poetics as these succeed each other” (1992: 20). This is true to a certain extent when we consider that the very same Western classics were once used for the sake of enlightenment which was expected to come from the West and they were “rewritten” so that they could fit in with this ideology of the 1940s at the time of the Translation Bureau³. As Kahraman notes, “the heart of the [westernization] project was contingent on the fact that everything had been shaped and formulated under the strong will of a leading elite in the climate created by an authoritarian single party regime” (2004, URL). However, today, (as this case study also reveals), we find “rewritings” of the classics suited to different ideologies appearing side by side. This is due to the fact that “the axis of political will shifted to the peripheral forces rather than the central one” (Kahraman 2004, URL). As a result, there is a struggle for dominion among these forces. This will be clarified when we examine the “patronage” system

³ For further information see Tahir-Gürçağlar (2003).

in Lefevere's terms.

While professionals, represented by "the critics, reviewers, teachers, translators" (Lefevere 1992: 14), try to control the literary system from the inside, there is another "control factor, which operates mostly outside the literary system, which [is] called "patronage"" (ibid, 15). Patronage is exerted by powerful persons or certain power groups such as "a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers, and last but not least, the media, both newspapers and magazines and larger television corporations" (ibid, 15).

Lefevere makes a distinction between "differentiated" and "undifferentiated" patronage. According to this distinction, "[p]atronage is undifferentiated when its three components, the ideological, the economic, and the status components, are all dispensed by one and the same patron" (Lefevere 1992: 17). This was the case during the westernization period when there was an authoritarian single party regime under which the Translation Bureau was instituted as a branch of the Ministry of National Education. "[M]ost of the prominent intellectuals of the time were employed to contribute to the grand task of translating the Western classics into Turkish" (Kahraman 2004, URL).

"Patronage is differentiated, on the other hand, when economic success is relatively independent of ideological factors, and does not necessarily bring status with it" (Lefevere 1992: 17). In other words, Lefevere bases the notion of differentiated patronage only on the independence of economic success and status from ideological factors. When we consider the

parties involved in this case we find a kind of differentiated patronage which is not only limited to Lefevere's definition. As an example in case, the ruling party in Turkey is AKP (Justice and Development Party), considered a moderate Islamist party, represented by 46, 6 percent of the votes in the last elections. The Minister of Education, who promoted the "rewriting" of the classics by assigning a list of "100 Essential Readings", is from this party. Certain publishers which are considered to have Islamist tendencies published the "Islamic" translations. It is easy to conclude that the dominant ideology in Turkey is the Islamist one by looking at this picture. However, there is the other side of the coin. Although the Islamist ideology is supported by a strong power base, such as a ruling political party, it is not the dominant ideology. Laicism is the dominant ideology because of the reasons mentioned in the introduction. For this reason "Islamic" translations, which can be considered the products of this ideology, receive a negative reaction from the laicist wing, as will be demonstrated in the seventh chapter. As a result, differentiated patronage in our case arises from the fragmented nature of the patrons involved and their conflicting ideologies. As Lefevere notes, each patron "count[s] on [the] professionals [under their influence] to bring the literary system in line with their own ideology" (1992: 16). For this reason, we find "rewritings" of the classics suited to different ideologies appearing side by side. Consequently, there is a struggle over the dominion of power.

In conclusion, Lefevere emphasizes the ideological factor inherent in each translation. He maintains that a translator's decisions are governed by ideology "whether he/she willingly embraces it, or whether it is imposed on

him/her as a constraint by some form of patronage” (ibid, 41). He concludes that:

An approach to translation which rests content with decreeing which translations ought to exist and which ought not is very limited indeed. Rather, it should analyze texts which refer to themselves as translations and other rewritings and try to ascertain the part they play in a culture. (Lefevere 1992: 96)

When we apply this notion to the case presented here we realize that there is an attitude which prevails in the public, and that is denying translations which exist just because they are in contradiction with their own ideology. By analyzing this discourse we can learn more about the dynamics of the social system, which is in constant struggle over the dominion of power; its influence on the development of the literary system in general and its reflection on translation in particular.

Lawrence Venuti

As this case deals with translation as the arena of ideological dispute within a society, where the struggle over the dominion of power between Islamist and laicist groups is strongly felt, Venuti’s poststructuralist approach to translation, which is characterized by his focus on ideology and power relations, is also beneficial. “The overriding assumption” of Lawrence Venuti’s *The Scandals of Translation* is that “asymmetries, inequities, relations of domination and dependence exist in every act of translating, of putting the translated in the service of the translating culture” (1998a: 4). He examines the role of cultural values and institutions in translation and the social effects of translated texts. In fact, he considers translation as a challenge to dominant cultural values

and institutions (cf. *ibid*, 1). In our case, Islamic translations have been considered as a challenge to laicist values and institutions. For this reason they attracted much heated attention. Therefore, Venuti's ideas are relevant for this case study only if we approach his views of "dominant cultural values" and "cultural identities" "constructed by academic, religious and political institutions" (*ibid*, 2) critically.

In his view, "[t]ranslations, [...], inevitably perform a work of domestication" (Venuti 1998a: 5). He uses the term "domestication" in the sense of translation's "recreating cultural values" (*ibid*). This is partly due to his focus on translation as a site of intercultural power relations. When the values of one culture are weighed against the values of another, this approach is not misleading. However, in this case study, where translation is considered from the perspective of intracultural power relations, viewing cultural values as homogeneous does not work. In other words, we cannot claim that the members of a specific culture would have identical cultural identities. They have certain points in common; however the influence of religious, nationalist or ethnic factors varies on every individual.

Similarly, "domestication" is a relative concept which varies according to the reader and his/her cultural identity. For instance, a translation which is marked by religious motifs and a language which is identified as "Islamic", sounds familiar to the members of religious groups whereas it would be highly "foreignizing" for other groups. However, we should note that, in Venuti's view, a "domesticating" translation strategy "rewrites the foreign text in domestic dialects and discourses, always a choice of certain domestic values to the exclusion of others" (1998a: 67). Venuti, thereby, admits that

“[a]ny language use is [...] a site of power relationships because a language, at any historical moment, is a specific conjuncture of a major form holding sway over minor variables” (ibid, 10). By “major form” and “minor variables”, he means “the standard dialect in dominance but subject to constant variation from regional or group dialects, jargons, clichés and slogans, stylistic innovations, nonce words, and the sheer accumulation of previous uses” (9-10). In our case, language use becomes a site of power relationships due to the language preferences inscribed by two major ideologies: Language users holding the Islamist ideology tend to use old Turkish, with words derived from Arabic and Persian as well as phrases with the word *Allah* in them, whereas laicist ideology followers are inclined to use “purified” Turkish. I am aware that this is a generalization because there are left wing intellectuals who argue that purification of the Turkish language impoverishes it. However, as the Islamic translations received criticism for their use of language, we need to resort to such generalizations from time to time since they invite us to explore broadly-based language preferences and patterns.

For Venuti, “domestication” is assimilative. “And the very function of translating is assimilation, the inscription of a foreign text with domestic intelligibilities and interests” (1998a: 11). Venuti favors “minoritizing” translation to “assimilative”.

Good translation is minoritizing: it releases the remainder by cultivating a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal. (ibid)

In our case, Islamic translations are “minoritizing” if we regard the use of religious circles’ discourse as substandard and marginal and “assimilative” if we regard them as serving domestic religious interests.

As a result, Venuti assumes that deviations from the standard and proliferation of the minor variables will defamiliarize the readers and enable them to acknowledge that this is in fact a translation, an encounter with the foreign. His notion is deeply rooted in the acknowledgement of standard and canon. However, we also need to bear in mind that, the reception of each reader varies according to their cultural identity and values. For instance, an Islamic encoding of language in translation would sound familiar to the members of religious groups whereas it would be highly foreignizing for other groups. Therefore, the major setback in Venuti’s assumptions lies in the essentialist dichotomy of major/minor uses of language and cultural values.

Tymoczko makes a similar remark:

Venuti has a hard time maintaining consistent distinctions between the polar opposites he works with, a difficulty that is actually no surprise. A number of translation theorists, including myself have argued that such binaries do not work very well in translation studies and that the best of binaries tend to break down; see Bassnett (1992), Tymoczko (1985, 1999:ch. 1), and sources cited. Not surprising, similar objections can be raised with respect to the binaries that Venuti proposes – whether it is the binary of fluent/resistant or foreignizing/domesticating. (2000: 36)

Yet, Venuti’s notion of “appropriation” is valuable for the case presented here. Appropriation differs from domestication because its main aim is to construct domestic cultural identities. In cases where the translation sounds familiar to certain groups it might be said that the messages conveyed by the translated

text are more powerful and proliferating. This could be explained by Venuti's notion of "mirroring".

Translation forms domestic subjects by enabling a process of "mirroring" or self-recognition: the foreign text becomes intelligible when the reader recognizes himself or herself in the translation by identifying the domestic values that motivated the selection of that particular foreign text, and that are inscribed in it through a particular discursive strategy. The self-recognition is recognition of the domestic cultural norms and resources that constitute the self, that define it as a domestic subject. The process is basically narcissistic: the reader identifies with an ideal projected by the translation, usually values that have achieved authority in the domestic culture and dominate those of other cultural constituencies. (1998a: 77)

As a result, classics addressing Christian values are suitable for promoting Islamic values when they are "appropriated" according to the cultural values and interests of religious groups. Venuti makes a similar remark: "Circulating in the church, the state and the school, a translation can be powerful in maintaining or revising the hierarchy of values in the translating language" (1998a: 68).

In conclusion, our case here resembles a case of "appropriation" in Venuti's terms, the aim being to create domestic subjects with marginal yet ascendant values as a challenge to the dominant ones. And this act has the capacity to bring about change in a society. Therefore, it becomes obvious that translation plays an important role in the power relations within the domestic culture since imposing marginal yet ascendant values through translation might have the power to shake and overthrow dominant ones. And for this reason "Islamicising" strategy applied in the translation of Western classics recommended to primary schools received criticism from

the laicist wing as they considered these translations as a threat to their values. This issue will be further taken up in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE PLANNING AS POWER STRUGGLE

Certain Concepts in Culture Planning

Even-Zohar defines culture planning as an “instance of creating new options for a repertoire of a culture” (2005, URL). What he means by the repertoire of culture is “the aggregate of options utilized by a group of people and by the individual members of the group, for the organization of life” (Even-Zohar 2002: 166). Although he does not deny the factor of “spontaneity” in the development of a cultural repertoire emerging out of “market negotiations”, he assumes that it “needs several modifications” (ibid). And he emphasizes the role of “deliberate acts”, i.e “deliberate intervention”, because, according to his view, “once any body [...] starts to act for the promotion of certain elements and for the suppression of other elements, “spontaneity and deliberate acts *ipso facto* become mutually interdependent” (Even-Zohar 2005, URL). Similarly, Toury defines planning as follows. If there are “options” in a repertoire, some “choices have to be made” and certain people or groups “make decisions for others to follow” (Toury 2002: 151).

“Social cohesion” is another key word in Even-Zohar’s work because “physical force” has been an insufficient tool for rulers throughout history; they had to persuade as well. As a result, they had to “take deliberate action in order to create a cultural repertoire that would be accepted by at least part of the population under their dominion” (Even-Zohar 2005, URL). In Even-Zohar’s view “the implementation of planning provides socio-cultural

cohesion” which “may become a necessary condition for creating a new entity, and/or for the survival of an existing entity” (2005, URL). Therefore, groups of people resort to planning to secure these conditions. As Toury points out, there is involvement with “change” in instances where “planning amounts to an attempt to introduce new options, and/or get rid of old ones”, especially in institutionalized cultures and in other instances where there are other “attempts to prevent changes”; he considers the latter also as “planning” (Toury 2002: 151). In summary, planning is an act which secures social cohesion and which results in change or prevention of change according to these two scholars.

In the case of a polarized society, we might assume that certain groups with conflicting ideologies strive to provide social cohesion by creating a cultural repertoire that will be accepted by their supporters. For example, religious groups as well as laicist groups implement their own models to govern the organization of life in all aspects.

Ways of Implementing a New Cultural Repertoire

As for the ways of implementing a new repertoire both Even-Zohar and Toury mention the necessity of a “power base”. According to Even-Zohar, for a successful implementation “planners must either have the power, or obtain the endorsement of those who possess power” (2005, URL). Otherwise, it remains as a pathetic attempt that attracts nobody’s attention. Western classics translated into Islamist language code, which may not be acceptable to the laicist groups in society, fully makes sense to Islamic groups who are

also backed up by other products of a planned cultural repertoire such as the way of clothing, other religious practices that govern their life, *imam hatip*⁵ schools and more specifically original texts which promote an Islamist ideology. In other words, they have a strong power base both in terms of a large circle of followers (citizens) and a moderate Islamist party in the political arena. Therefore, their culture producers are transformed into powerful agents. That is the reason why these translational practices become as visible as to be carried to the headlines of the newspapers. The laicist groups fear that this culture which is planned by the opposing groups will take over. Toury, indeed, attracts our attention to this point. According to him, “planning is performed for the very sake of attaining power rather than as a *bona fide* attempt to introduce ‘desirable’ changes” (2002:152). Consequently, planning becomes an important factor in the “struggles for domination” (ibid).

Even-Zohar and Toury both mention the techniques utilized to achieve or sustain power. Even-Zohar, for instance, mentions creating “awareness that there may be profits” (in cases of establishing a new entity) or a “threat” (in cases of an established entity) (2005, URL). We should note here that, Even-Zohar’s terminology contains vague terms such as “entity”. For instance, he defines an established entity as an “institutionalized state” and he uses the term also in reference to “a large organization”, an “enterprise”,

⁵ *Imam Hatip* Schools were established by the state right after the founding of the Republic to provide vocational education for preachers. These schools have long been a controversial issue, especially since 1980s when their numbers proliferated. Laicist groups in Turkey became increasingly critical of the purpose and number of these institutions and regarded them as the feeding ground of political Islam in Turkey (cf., Çakır, Bozan and Talu 2004, URL). The current Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has also graduated from one of these schools.

“institution” or an “establishment” (Even-Zohar 2005, URL). He provides the example of a regular school for a branch of the institution:

A regular school, for instance, is a branch of “the institution” in view of its ability to sell the type of properties that the dominating establishment (i.e., the central part of the cultural institution) wishes to sell to students. (Even-Zohar 2005, URL)

What would be the “type of properties” that the “dominating establishment” would sell to students? I assume that these properties that are sold by the dominating establishment would be ideological views and values, even though Even-Zohar’s terminology is sanitized in terms of ideology. He states that the products of a cultural repertoire dictate “one’s view of reality and, hence, all behavioral components derivable from it” (Even-Zohar 2005, URL). We might therefore infer that, one’s view of reality is dependent on one’s ideology when we think of the term ideology in its broadest sense to refer to all of our thinking (cf., Eagleton 1991).

Hence, in our case, threats are posed by the laicists, as their ideology is more “established” in terms of being the dominant ideology in Turkey. From the perspective of laicist groups the threat is the danger of the *shariat* regime taking over, following the model of Iran. Toury stresses that “false arguments [may be] used [...] in an attempt to lead the consumers astray” (2002: 152). Consequently, these claims of threat may be false or manipulated in their attempts to sustain power.

Another point which is worth mentioning here is the conditions necessary for a successful implementation. For a successful transfer to occur, according to Even-Zohar, a “need” has to be created, i.e. “a willingness to consume” the imported goods (2002: 170). He gives various examples to

this; one of them is the case of imported texts via translation. The need for them is created by making the “semiotic models of these texts integral parts of the home repertoire” (2002: 170). Toury points out the same notion of introducing “hitherto non-existing models”, through translation, into a culture (2002: 154). He further maintains that,

a desire to introduce a text into a culture by way of translation, including the possible resolution to retranslate (rather than reprint an existing translation, submit it to revision, or simply forget all about it), always involves a series of interconnected decisions; and since it always entails some change of the receiving culture, such decisions can justifiably be taken to constitute planning activities. (Toury 2002: 154)

The translation of the Western classics during the modernization period in Turkey for instance is connected with the need for enlightenment, which is believed to come from the West. Creating this need was part of a cultural planning process and translational norms at the time were geared towards ignoring the religious factors in those classics because modernization was considered to be free from religion. Now, the decision to retranslate them, instead of reprinting, revising or simply forgetting all about them, “involves a series of interconnected decisions” (2002: 154), as asserted by Toury.

The activity of retranslating the Western classics was first triggered by the Ministry of Education’s call to introduce them to school children as part of a recommended list of books in schools. This decision to make Western classics, which may no longer have a pedagogical use, a part of the national educational curriculum, was followed by retranslations, some of which are only related to commercial interests whereas others have a more ideological orientation and hence a cultural planning perspective. This, as Toury states, “entails some change of the receiving culture” (2002: 154). From the

perspective of “struggles for domination” (ibid) the needs created by opposing parties are certainly different and thus a resentment of modernization leads the Islamist groups, who are agents of change with a strong power base, to resort to translation strategies that highlight those once ignored religious factors in the Western classics, by adapting them to the Muslim religion, to such an extent that they might even be considered as “fictitious” or “pseudotranslations”.

Pseudotranslation as a “Disguise Technique”

Pseudotranslations are “a more or less deliberate attempt to introduce new options into a culture while neutralizing many of the objections that might have arisen, had the same novelties been offered in a straightforward, non-disguised fashion”, according to Toury (2002: 155). In order to apply Toury’s view to our case, if we consider using literary products such as novels as a means to spread the Islamist view (or ideology), it follows that besides highlighting the already existing religious factors in the classics, injecting⁶ elements of an Islamic view into the translations might be evaluated as a special case of pseudotranslation which could be regarded as a disguise technique in cultural planning. It should be noted that “DISGUISE TECHNIQUES [...] often act as safeguards from losing such a struggle [for domination], especially when power has not yet been won” (ibid, 152).

⁶ For further information, see Karadağ (2003).

This notion is valid when we consider that the dominant ideology of the Turkish Republic is a laicist one which is also supported by the constitution. Thus, although the Islamist ideology has a strong power base it has yet to achieve this status. Thus, the struggle has not yet been won. In this case, injecting elements of Islamic ideology into translations is a “disguise technique” which certainly would attract less attention than circulating original products with Islamic values embedded in them. Furthermore, a Western classic is harmless and is more likely to appeal to a wider circle of readers whereas a novel of religious creeds attracts only a limited readership. Although the Minister of Education stated that “Muslims should write their own *Heidis* instead of Islamicizing it” (*Radikal*, 27 August 2006), he, as the Minister of the laicist Turkish Republic, could not have recommended novels with a religious twist to school children in Turkey.

Conclusion and Critical Remarks

In conclusion, Toury and Even-Zohar’s notion of culture planning emphasizes “the need to look more closely at translation itself in terms of planning” (Toury 2002: 159). The case presented here is an example of the significance of translation in an instance of two-way cultural planning: that of the Islamist and laicist ideologies. There are attempts to spread the Islamist ideology⁷ on the one hand, to gain more power, and attempts to ensure the survival of

⁷This issue is taken up further in Chapter 6.

the laicist ideology on the other hand, to sustain power. This constitutes a situation of power struggle for domination in a polarized society.

However, Robinson states that, the essentialist thinking behind the systems approach (assumed by Even-Zohar and Toury) leads to a “high level of abstraction” (1997: 42) and a rigid outlook on the social system which disregards its dynamics and its constantly changing configuration. For instance, we need to assume that Islamist ideology is a new “entity” which is being created to gain power, although this ideology already has a strong power base as mentioned earlier. According to Gentzler, it is important to “explore the specific situation in which institutions of power have had an impact on translation activity and the resulting impact that translations have had on the development of culture” (2002: 197). As a result, translation is certainly used as a tool in cultural planning; however, this may or may not lead to a cultural change or lead to a change in unexpected ways. In other words, any culture planning activity rests on the wrong assumption that a homogeneous language, culture, or identity can be created for a diverse population that constitutes the nation or society. Thus, the implementation of planning does not necessarily provide “socio-cultural cohesion”. On the contrary, it might make social disintegration more obvious as illustrated by this case study. The fact that the “Islamicizing strategy” adopted in certain translations of the Western classics, recommended to primary school children, received such an enormous reaction from the other groups in the society is an example to this. As a result the practice of translation gained visibility and this brings us to our next topic: The In/Visibility of Translation.

CHAPTER V

THE IN / VISIBILITY OF TRANSLATION

The Secondary Status of Translation

The visibility versus invisibility of a translation, and thereby the translator, is an issue that often comes up in translation theory. In Bassnett's view, visibility is the keyword of the 1990s (cf. 1996:22). Translation scholars analyze the conditions that make translation invisible on the one hand, and offer perspectives that would help render translation and thereby the translator visible, on the other hand.

Bassnett is one of them. She questions the current position of translation especially in the English speaking world and provides evidence that it is in fact regarded as a "secondary" and "inferior" activity (Bassnett, 1994: 11). As the role assigned to translation phased out in the English-speaking world, English being the dominant language, translation was shackled down to its current secondary status. Venuti explains this situation as follows:

English and English-language values achieved global dominance in the post war period, establishing in the United States and Britain nationalist cultural environments receptive to foreign texts mainly when they are or can be read as ideologically compatible. (1992:13)

Although we might expect the opposite – i.e., translation to have a prestigious position – with regard to minor languages and cultures, this is not the case in Turkey today. Although the rate of translated material is quite

high in Turkey, the role of translators as *import agents* in contributing to the enrichment of language and culture is not recognized.

Bassnett provides evidence for the inferior status of translation by maintaining that translators' names sometimes do not even appear on the translated texts (cf. 1994: 11). Maier makes a similar remark.

Not only are works in translation reviewed with less frequency than translators would wish, translation itself is often not addressed (much less evaluated) when those works are reviewed, and at times the translator's name is even omitted. What is more, when reviewers do address the translator's work, their comments are frequently limited to a single adjective or adverb, [...]. (Maier 1996: 243)

As a result, the role of translators who enable readers to read works from other cultures is completely underestimated or "erased". The illusion that "the translation process has no bearing on a reading of the text" is created (Bassnett 1994: 11). Consequently, although readers claim to have read Dostoyevski, for instance, they do not recognize that what they read is in fact an interpretation, among many alternatives, of Dostoyevski's work by the translator. Hermans explains this as the withdrawal of the translator "behind the narrating voice", especially in translated fiction, and he finds this situation "paradoxical" because "[t]he primary voice, the authoritative original voice, is in fact absent. And yet we casually state it is the only one that presents itself to us" (1996: 26).

Furthermore, literary critics make comments on the source author's style and the way s/he uses language via the translated text and provide examples from the translated text without ever mentioning the translator's name or simply acknowledging that the product they make comments on is in fact a translation. The examples provided by the critics for an illustration of

the source author's style are certainly from the translated text but they create the illusion that they are the lines written by the author her/himself. Thus, "the translator is rendered invisible" and "[t]he fundamental role played by the translator is erased" (Bassnett 1994: 11). Venuti provides evidence for this fact from literary reviews of translated works in the Anglo-American system. He draws attention to reviewers' approach to translated works. Quoting from Ronald Christ, Venuti emphasizes that "reviewers often fail to mention that a book is a translation (while quoting from the text as though it were written in English)" (Christ in Venuti, 1994: 20).

As a result of this secondary status of translation in the society, translators not only suffer "feelings of discouragement, bitterness, and impotence" (Maier 1996: 243), but they are also accorded "low pay and low status" (Bassnett 1994: 11). As Venuti puts it, "translation today is itself a minor use of language, a lesser art, an invisible craft" (1998b: 135). Translation is perceived as "manual as opposed to intellectual labor" in the society and this reflects on "copyright law and translators' contracts with publishers" (Venuti 1992: 2). This prevailing conception of translation in the society results from the notion of "the superiority of the original".

This discourse dooms the translator from the outset, for the enterprise of translating is thus viewed as less valuable than other forms of writing. Translation in this paradigm is a servile activity and the translated text stands in a lower position *vis-à-vis* the hegemonic position of the source text. (Bassnett 1996: 12)

For this reason, translation has often been associated with "secondariness and failure" (Arrojo 1995: 21).

The Ideology of Originality

Bassnett indicates that, with the advent of the "ideology of originality", the idea of translation as an "inferior copy" developed and this view governs ever since (1994: 12). According to Venuti, "translation is marginalized today by an essentially romantic conception of authorship" (1992: 3). According to this romantic conception,

The 'original' is a form of self-expression appropriate to the author, a copy true to his personality or intention, an image endowed with resemblance, whereas the translation can be no more than a copy of a copy, derivative, simulacral, false, an image without resemblance. (Venuti 1992: 3)

Similarly, Arrojo concludes that

In the plot which tradition has constructed for the relationships which can be established between translation and original, between translator and author, or between the translated text and its readers, the translator's name and interference have been condemned either to oblivion or to disdain by a conception of originality [...]. (1995: 22)

Hence, the original is regarded as a stable core of meaning which reflects the personality and intention of its author whereas the translation is merely a derivative copy according to this notion. Consequently, "the original is idealized and related to creation, while translation is associated with the limits, shortcomings, and inadequacies of what is purely human" (Arrojo 1995: 21). For this reason, "[t]he original is eternal, the translation dates" (Venuti 1992: 3). This is the proof of the inferior nature of translation.

Translation occupies an inferior position as opposed to the original and "the translator remains subordinate to the author of the original work" (Venuti 1992: 4).

The unrealistic notion of fidelity to the original also arises from this conception. However, the notion of fidelity is inevitably accompanied by the impossibility of translation. As Bankier puts it,

Until recently, FIDELITY was an article of faith, and translators would ritualistically affirm the absolute value of faithfulness to the original and in the same breath say that, ipso facto, translation was impossible. (1996: 121)

The conclusion that translation is impossible is a natural outcome of the impossible task assigned to the translator. The translator is expected “to take the place of another and to represent someone else’s voice in a foreign language and culture, in a different time and space” (Arrojo 1995: 21).

However, as Bassnett points out, “[r]esistance to the notion of translation as a secondary, second class activity has accelerated in recent years, parallel to the development of the discipline of Translation Studies” (1996: 12). Poststructuralism and deconstruction in particular and postmodernism in general have initiated a radical reconsideration of ideas such as originality, authorship and fidelity to the original. Under the light of these developments it became possible to realize the ideological perspective underlying these notions which result in the invisibility of the translation and translator as explained above.

The Implications of Postmodernism on Translation

Bassnett provides a summary of how the emphasis shifted from the source to the translation, which in turn enabled the translator to become visible (cf., 1994: 13). She refers to the re-readings of Walter Benjamin which evaluate his idea of translation as “the means of assuring the survival of the text”, to

Derrida who argues that “translation is an original creation of a text that has previously existed in a language inaccessible to target language readers”, to de Campos brothers who are “the proponents of the cannibalistic translation” which “involves the ingesting and recreating of a text deemed worthy of reading” (Bassnett 1994: 13) and to postcolonial translation theorists and practitioners who discuss “the power of the translator to transform a text” (ibid, 14). These perspectives reinforce the visibility of the translator. Now let us examine the underlying notions behind these developments in further detail.

As far as the re-readings of Walter Benjamin are concerned, Venuti indicates that,

Largely through commentaries on Walter Benjamin’s essay ‘The Task of the Translator’, poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man explode the binary opposition between ‘original’ and ‘translation’ which underwrites the translator’s invisibility today. (1992: 6)

These thinkers question “the concepts of originality and authorship that subordinate the translation to the foreign text” (Venuti 1992: 7). In their view, the original text needs translation to pursue what Benjamin calls an ‘afterlife’ (cf., ibid). In other words, the original is dependent on translation. For this reason, “it cannot be definitive since it can be translated” (de Man in Venuti, 1992: 7). “And if the original calls for a complement, it is because at the origin it was not there without fault, full, complete, total, identical to itself” (Derrida in Venuti, 1992: 7). This is the dethronement of the superiority of the original. The original and the translation are evaluated on equal grounds as “derivative and heterogeneous” forms “consisting of diverse linguistic and cultural materials which destabilize the work of signification, making meaning

plural and differential" (Venuti 1992: 7). Acceptance of "meaning as differential plurality" (ibid, 12) involves the refusal of a stable core of meaning the original is expected to contain.

If there is no stable 'original' to which one could be objectively faithful without interfering with its allegedly intrinsic meaning, the traditional issues which have concerned translators and theoreticians for as long as this complex activity has been practised take a radically different turn and begin to liberate the general reflection on translation from the unrealistic expectations and dead-end arguments which have transformed its study into a series of failed attempts at giving definite answers to the perennial question of how translators could possibly become transparent in order to be faithful to the languages and cultures involved in their task. (Arrojo 1998: 26)

Plurality of meaning in each text makes several different readings possible. This is to accept that each reader brings a different reading to the text. This view is associated with "the birth of the reader celebrated by Roland Barthes as a direct consequence of the death of the author" (Arrojo 1995: 23). As a result, the power relationship between writer and reader is broken. Furthermore, the translator is situated in an authorly position. The translator, also being the reader of a text, becomes visible by marking the translation with her/his own individual, unique reading. The translator's interference to the text results from his/her interpretation of the text. Nevertheless, as Arrojo warns us, the interpretation of this reader who is born out of the death of the author cannot be the "stable, definite origin" (ibid, 24) of meaning because it will be subject to "the interference represented by someone else's interpretation" (30).

We also need to consider Derrida's conception of translation as "regulated transformation" (Arrojo 1995: 29) in order to gain a better understanding of the poststructuralist model for the translator's task.

[T]ranslation as regulated transformation, [...] presupposes the inevitable "impropriety" of interpretation and gives up the attempt to please (or to appease) an author whose allegedly controlling and potentially punitive powers have already been deconstructed. (ibid)

This conception not only "releases translation from its subordination to the foreign text" but it also "redefines the notion of equivalence in translation" (Venuti 1992: 7-8). The notion of equivalence is redefined because there is no one stable meaning in any text which can be transferred into any other language. Therefore, it is not possible to find a simple equivalent for "multiple and divided meanings in the foreign text" (8). Translation "displaces it with another set of meanings, equally multiple and divided" (ibid). Thereby, the translator's interference to the foreign text is acknowledged as inevitable and legitimate, making the translated text "a text in its own right" (ibid).

Another notion contributing to the visibility of translation is the recognition of a larger context within which translations happen. Each text – whether translated or not – is produced within specific institutional, cultural, social, political and ideological frameworks. Venuti maintains that, a text is "constrained by social institutions in which it is produced and consumed" (1992: 9). It can either serve to sustain these institutions or resist them. This view endows translation with the necessary powers to play an important role in shaping culture, society and its institutions. In this sense, "any attempt to make translation visible today is necessarily a political gesture" (Venuti 1992:

10). In line with this view, Venuti recommends strategies that will make translation visible. These will be covered in the following section.

The poststructuralist approach to translation reinforced with notions such as the “legitimate interference” of the translator and translation as “regulated transformation” “will only be truly able to start making a difference when visibility begins to be marked by the signature of [...] [the translator’s] own authorial name” (Arrojo 1995: 31). What Arrojo means here is that, “the consciously visible translator should start to build a name, a “proper”⁸ name for himself or herself that will make his or her readers aware of the “translator-function”⁹ (ibid). This will release translation from the “divine condemnation”, i.e. “the repression of men’s authorial will and of their desire to bear a proper name” (ibid, 22).

In summary, translation is not a “subservient, transparent filter” (Bassnett 1996: 22) as opposed to the common view of translation. As Bankier puts it, “the common view of translation was modeled on what Karl Popper called the bucket theory of the mind” (1996: 120). In other words, it is not possible to transfer meaning intact from one language into another. Meaning is no longer regarded as fixed because it is encoded within a particular context in a specific time. In addition, meaning is plural and differential “as a weave of connotations, allusions, and discourses specific to the [...] culture” (Venuti 1992: 8). Therefore the decoding process, i.e. reading, will necessarily involve interpretation. This recognition releases

⁸ Arrojo’s emphasis of the “proper name” is related to the Tower of Babel myth mentioned in Derrida’s “Des Tours de Babél” (1985).

⁹ Used in relation with Foucault’s conception of the “translator-function”.

translators from their subordination to the source text and prevents them from assuming the humble role of a “copier” who needs to remain invisible in order not to interfere (or create the illusion of not interfering) with the source text’s meaning. In other words, translation theory bestows the power to “change texts and so change the world” (Bassnett 1996: 23) on the translator.

Translators are “compelled now to recognize the role they play in reshaping texts, a role that is far from innocent, and is very visible indeed” (ibid).

However, these views only reflect advancement from the perspective of translation theory, because the views that empower both translation and the translator have yet to gain acceptance in society. In other words, the translator’s ideological role and activity is still invisible in practice. This study analyzes a case in which translation became highly visible in society and made the public aware of the ideological role of the translator. For this reason, it constitutes an important case in terms of demonstrating the conditions through which translation can acquire visibility in society. The following section offers translation scholars’ suggested views to overcome invisibility, in order to evaluate whether they coincide with the conditions which made translation visible, demonstrated by the present case.

Overcoming Invisibility

Venuti contends that “translators themselves are among the agents of their shadowy existence” (1992: 1). In Venuti’s view, translators assume this position by not developing “an acute awareness of the cultural and social conditions of their work” and by “devoting little time to sustained

methodological reflection” (ibid). Venuti encourages translators as “critically self-conscious writers” to produce not only translations but also commentaries, criticism or theories. He believes that translators will be able to make their activity more visible to readers in this way. According to this view, translators are expected to act as active agents who are aware of the significance of their role and their power to shape culture and should reflect this position on their writings in the form of commentary, criticism or theory and make their activity visible to the society instead of hiding behind the shadows that obscure their work.

Maier addresses this issue from a more specific perspective. She draws attention to the frequency and quality of literary translation reviews, which she believes to be very poor indeed (cf. 1996: 243). In her opinion, the visibility of translation practice can be attained by “increasing both the number of translation reviews and their quality” (1996: 243). Similar to Venuti’s suggestion, Maier contends that translators themselves should assume the responsibility of increasing the quantity and quality of translation reviews, thereby contributing to the visibility of translation practices. She proposes three strategies for that:

- 1) Write reflective reviews that address the activity of reviewing as well as the work(s) under review.
 - 2) Make the fact and activity of translation difficult, if not impossible, to overlook.
 - 3) Encourage publishers to call attention to translation.
- (Maier 1996: 256-258)

The first strategy will put reviewing itself under scrutiny and undermine the “enthusiasm for a readable translation” (1996: 256). This is closely linked with Venuti’s remark about the demand for fluency of the translated text which leads to the transparency of the translator and his/her work. This requires the

reviewer to move away from the narrow definition of equivalence and “speak of translation as strategy or trade-off rather than the proverbial loss” (ibid). Maier recommends translators to benefit from recent work in translation theory to be able to write such reviews. Recent developments in translation theory will enable the translator as reviewer to be aware of the incompatibility between the two literary *polysystems* involved in the activity of translation. As a result, the reviewer will be able to “identify the accommodation strategies translators use (or refuse) as well as the implications of those strategies for both translated works and their originals” (Maier 1996: 257). In short, the decisions of translators, as well as the social and cultural constraints underlying their decisions, will be reflected and gain visibility through these reviews written by the translators themselves. In addition, this will lead readers to reconsider their expectations from a translation.

The second strategy of making the act of translation difficult to overlook can be achieved in at least three ways, in Maier’s view (cf. 257). The first incorporates Venuti’s call for the development of “projects to challenge the discursive regime of fluency” (Venuti in Maier, 1996: 257). This will be examined in further detail in the following paragraphs but we should note here shortly that such projects would involve “broaden[ing] the range of dialects and discourses” (Venuti 1994: 21). This strategy will presumably make “the reader aware, for example, that the text was not “originally” written in English” (Maier 1996: 257) as well as calling attention to the translator’s work. A second way to call attention to translation is to write “translator’s introductions and afterwords in which translation practice is defined and discussed” (258). In this way, translators can “acquaint readers with the

considerations that have directed their practice” (ibid). A third way would involve “present[ing] their translations precisely as readings” (ibid). This is closely related to the notions presented in the section The Implications of Postmodernism on Translation. It requires realizing meaning as plural and differential. If translators present their work as one of the possible readings or as an interpretation of a text they will contribute to the enriching dimension of their work.

The third strategy involves translators’ participation in the “packaging and promotion of the books they translate” (Maier 1996: 258). In other words, translators should be involved more deeply in “the great food chain of the production of culture” (Wasserman in Maier, 1996: 259). Maier’s suggested strategies of writing reviews, introductions and afterwords, and participating actively in the preparation of promotional material require an awareness of the translator about his/her role in the production of culture. The awareness of the translator will then contribute to translation’s visibility.

Parallel to this, Venuti contends that translation can gain more “political power if it is extended to other institutionalized cultural practices, like the publishing and reviewing of translated texts” (1992: 10). He refers to the current practices of Anglo-American publishing which are reflected in the figures of translated texts in the Anglo-Saxon world. These figures are quite low compared to the rest of the world, especially with regard to translations from English into other languages (cf. Venuti 1992: 6).

Anglo-American publishing has been instrumental in producing readers who are aggressively monolingual and culturally parochial while reaping the benefits of successfully imposing Anglo-American cultural values on a sizeable foreign readership. (ibid)

Venuti also draws attention to the reviewers' praise of a "fluent discourse" (1994: 16). He notes that fluent translation is recommended for all types of foreign texts. A fluent translation is a result of "the translator's effort to insure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning" (ibid). This, in turn, creates the "illusionistic effect" of transparency, "the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original'" (ibid). Thus, the translator's crucial interference in the source text is undermined.

In Venuti's view, a goal such as fluency/ transparency of translation, which is not only reinforced by the reviewers but also by "cultural trends" (1994: 20), leads the translator to resort to "familiarising" and/or "domesticating" strategies in translation. Thus the translator "make[s] his or her work 'invisible,'" (19). In summary, translators are encouraged to become *invisible* by maintaining a *fluent* discourse that is attained by *domesticating* strategies. Thereby, "the translated text seems 'natural,' i.e., not translated" (ibid). Yet, the effects of implementing fluent strategies in translation, such as "evoking the illusion of authorial presence, maintaining the cultural dominance of Anglo-American individualism [and], representing foreign cultures with ideological discourses specific to English-language cultures" are concealed "under the veil of transparency" (Venuti 1992: 6).

Consequently, the role Venuti assigns to "a socially aware and politically engaged translator" (1992: 11) is to reckon the effects of fluent discourse and to resist it in his/her translations. The function Venuti determines for the act of translating is both the righteous representation of foreign cultures and the emphasis that there is a translator behind every

translated text. He advocates the visibility of translation as an ideological move and suggests translation strategies that will render the translator's work visible.

However, it should be noted that, he does not claim his suggestions to have universal validity as he is speculating from the perspective of the Anglo-American culture he operates in. Hence, "resistant", (Venuti 1992), "foreignizing" (Venuti 1994) and "minoritizing" (Venuti 1998a) strategies might not serve the visibility of translation in other cultures. Furthermore, it is not possible to attribute one single strategy, namely "domesticating" or "assimilative" as opposed to "foreignizing" or "minoritizing" to a specific translation. This would be a limited evaluation confined within the boundaries of binary oppositions. In addition, Venuti asserts that

Good translation is minoritizing: it releases the remainder by cultivating a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal.
(1998a: 11)

His notion of "minoritizing translation" involves "promoting cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference by proliferating the variables within English" (1998a: 11). Promoting cultural innovation is linked with his consideration of a righteous representation of the foreign as well as recreating cultural values whereas proliferating the variables within English could be related to a language use that is defamiliarized to some extent. In short, he recommends strategies which lead to deviations from the standard language, from the canon, from the dominating culture. It is assumed that deviations from the standard will defamiliarize the readers and enable them to acknowledge that this is in fact a translation, an encounter with the foreign.

This assumption gives rise to the question of “which reader”. In other words, which reader is supposed to be alienated by deviation from the standard?

This reaction would vary according to the reader and his/her cultural identity and values.

In our case, religious discourse in translation would sound familiar to the members of religious groups whereas it would be highly foreignizing for other groups. A reader who is accustomed to the Islamic discourse would not be taken by surprise. Furthermore, cultural identities formed by religious and political institutions are heterogeneous. Members of a certain social class would have certain points in common; however the role of religious, nationalist or ethnic factors would vary on each individual. For this reason, it is possible to claim that neither a *foreignizing* or *minoritizing* strategy nor a *domesticating* or *assimilative* strategy has been adopted in the ‘Islamic translations’ of the classics. An equally valid statement would be that, both *minoritizing* and *assimilative* strategies have been adopted in the ‘Islamic translations’ of the classics.

So far, we have dealt with proposed strategies to make the translator and his/her work visible. The invisibility of the practice of translation is a fact today. However, there have been times in history when translation acquired visibility in the society. Bassnett refers to conditions serving the visibility of translation. She claims that “the supremacy of the original is a fairly recent phenomenon” (1994: 11). She gives examples from history that translation has not always been regarded as a “second-class activity” (ibid). For instance Bible translation was quite visible and it was “seen as an activity vital to understanding and to spiritual enlightenment” (12). Similarly, Renaissance

metaphors used by translators and scholars of the time revealed the power of translation because the Enlightenment Period was heavily dependent on translation. Translation, at that time, was a means to the enrichment of language and culture (cf. *ibid*). Indeed, there have been times when translation was positioned at the center of culture planning activities in societies. This was the case in Turkey in the period between 1940-1966, characterised by the activities of the state-sponsored Translation Bureau which was considered to be a part of the general cultural westernization project of Republican Turkey (cf. Tahir-Gürçağlar 2003). However, in cases such as these the visibility of translation arises from the importance assigned to translation. In other words, translation is considered important as a means of bringing enlightenment or innovation to the culture. Although the case presented here is another example of translation being used as a tool for culture planning, it displays certain characteristics which distinguish it from other culture planning activities in history, such as the Renaissance or the westernization project of Turkey.

Summary and Conclusion

We referred to the secondary status of translation especially in Anglo-Saxon culture. This status is due to two major reasons: one practical, the other theoretical. Practically, especially after the global dominance of the English language, the importance given to translation has diminished in the Anglo-Saxon world. This reflected on the rate of translated material. Venuti provides figures for the period between 1984 and 1990: "translations accounted for

approximately 3, 5 percent of the books published annually in the United States, 2, 5 percent in the United Kingdom” (1992: 6). However, although the Turkish language has a minor status compared to English¹⁰, and the rate of translated works especially from English is quite high, the activity of translation still remains invisible in practice. As a result, the role of translators who enable readers to read works from other cultures is completely underestimated. The reviews of translated works which rarely mention that the reviewed work is in fact a translation provide evidence for this.

Translators whose work has an inferior position in society experience bitter feelings and their work is not acknowledged in terms of payment and status. Theoretically, this prevailing conception of translation in the society results from the notion of “the superiority of the original”. The translated text is regarded as an inferior copy due to the “ideology of originality” which arises from the romantic conception of authorship. The original is viewed as a stable core of meaning which reflects the personality and intention of its author whereas the translation is considered merely a derivative copy.

The interdisciplinary field of Translation Studies, influenced by poststructuralist and postmodern notions developed in other fields, sidestepped the ideology of originality. Consequently, concepts of originality and authorship have been questioned. The plurality of meaning in each text has been recognized. The poststructuralist approach to translation, reinforced by notions such as the “legitimate interference” of the translator and translation as “regulated transformation” released translation from

¹⁰As Cronin (in Venuti 1998) points out, “the globalization of English has reduced all other languages to minor status” (in Venuti, 1998:143).

its subordination to the foreign text. These are giant steps from the point of view of translation theory, contributing to the visibility of translation as explained above. However, these notions have yet to gain acceptance in the public sphere. For this reason, translation scholars propose strategies that will help to overcome the invisibility of translation in the public. We reviewed them to evaluate whether they coincide with the conditions serving the visibility of translation in our case.

The issue of in/visibility is approached mainly from two perspectives. One of them is related to the conditions which rendered translation visible in certain periods in history. The other concerns strategies that will help overcome the invisibility of the translation practice today. There have been certain periods in history when translation was assigned the important role of bringing enlightenment and enrichment to a culture, which in turn made this activity visible. However today, translation is still invisible in practice. The strategies proposed by translation scholars to overcome the invisibility of translation are either related to the translators' writing reviews, commentaries, introductions and afterwords or engaging in translation projects that will challenge the discursive regime of transparency and applying specific strategies during the translation process that will attract attention to the translator's interference.

However these two perspectives do not coincide with the conditions serving the visibility of translation in our case. Translation has recently acquired visibility in Turkey irrespective of the factors that have been mentioned above. In other words, visibility of the translation in this case arises neither from the translators' efforts of writing reviews and introductions

nor from the important role of the enrichment of culture assigned to translation in the Turkish context. It is also not possible to claim that 'Islamic translations' of the Western classics acquired visibility due to the *minoritizing* or *foreignizing* strategies adopted by their translators for the reasons explained above. It is true that Islamic translations draw the attention of laicist groups to the translator's intervention in the text, however, this awareness of the translator's interference was not raised by the use of the above mentioned strategies which are related to "cultivating a heterogeneous discourse" (Venuti 1998a: 11) in order to resist the discursive regime of fluency. In the present case, translation became visible when it turned out to be the battleground of two conflicting ideologies and discourses as demonstrated earlier, in the fourth chapter. As a result, the case presented here adds a new dimension to the theories about the in/visibility of translation.

CHAPTER VI

THE 'ISLAMIC' RETRANSLATIONS OF '100 ESSENTIAL READINGS'

Political Background: A Polarized Society

Democracy in Turkey is associated with laicism, which is stated in the constitution of the Turkish Republic. Yet *laicism* has been brought to the agenda of political and public discussions in certain periods due to the conflicts arising between *Islamist* and *laicist* ideologies.

Laicism has been and still is associated with Atatürk, the commander of the War of Liberty, the founder of the Turkish Republic and also the founder of *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP), the Republican People's Party, the first political party in Turkey. Throughout the years, laicism has become the main condition for integrating with the world, namely the Western World. Thus, Islam and an Islamic life style have been considered as backwardness. Consequently, right wing parties made the protection of Islamic rights their main claim to strengthen their hands against the left wing parties, thus converting Islam into a political matter. Today this political ideology is defined as *Islamism*. According to Göle, a professor of sociology,

Contemporary Islamism, as it has emerged in Muslim homelands and European countries of immigration, seeks to make religious difference visible in public through micro-practices such as veiling at schools, the construction of mosques in Europe, gender segregation on public transport, food taboos ("helal" meat, alcohol prohibition) etc. Islam is carried to the forefront of public life by the new political claims and daily practices of Muslim migrants, urban youth, Islamic intellectuals and pious middle classes. Through such

practices, Muslim actors distinguish themselves, elaborate collectively a religious self, and carve new public spaces of their own in conformity with the requirements of their faith and an Islamic life-style. (2006: 3)

Thus, believing in Islam turns out to be more than a matter of faith and therefore a spiritual and cultural concept, but becomes an ideology which seeks to attract more people to its side by making itself visible in public.

In the 2002 elections, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP), the Justice and Development Party, representing the right wing, became the governing party on its own (the only case since 1987), and CHP became the opposing party in the parliament. Discussions around laicism accelerated even more as a consequence of the 2002 elections. The headlines of newspapers and the foreign press announced the election results as the “victory of the Islamist party” (cf. *Radikal*, 4 November 2002), signaling the upcoming laicism discussions and conflicts in Turkey. In addition, several pressure groups such as *Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği* (TÜSİAD), the Association of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists, expressed their doubts about the protection of democracy and laicism.

Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association:
Guard the fundamental principles of the Republic
Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, after congratulating AKP's election victory, emphasized that the new government should guard the fundamental principles and rules of the Republic.¹¹ (*Milliyet*, 4 November 2002, my translation¹²)

¹¹TÜSİAD: Cumhuriyet'in temel ilkelerini gözetin. AKP'nin seçim başarısını kutlayan TÜSİAD, yaptığı açıklamada, yeni hükümetin Cumhuriyet'in temel ilkeleri ve yönetim kurallarını gözetmesi gerektiğini vurguladı. (*Milliyet*, 4 November 2002)

¹²All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

Interpreting the election results as a "rare situation of political discharge in the democratic history of Turkey" (Ergin 2002, URL), the Turkish intelligentsia supported the reaction of the Turkish public who protested the years-long dominance of certain party leaders, the poor economic and political governance of these parties and the overall corruption in the country, especially in the last decade; and many columnists and journalists tried to reflect optimistic views about the new government, at the same time however securing their concerns about AKP's approach to democracy and laicism.

After the 2002 elections, the Turkish media, being one of the main pressure groups in the country, focused on these concerns about laicism and increasingly questioned the overall progress of the government in democratic requirements. Naturally, the media feeds from many conflicting views and discussions around laicism, making conflicts between ideologies even more visible. The AKP government receives criticism for being anti-laicist from the main opposition party, CHP, from the former president Ahmet Necdet Sezer and from military authorities.

Being one of the main actors in this environment and acting as the proprietor of laicism, CHP attacks AKP on the grounds of its *anti-laicist* perspective. CHP leader Deniz Baykal has built his opposition around the previous political views of the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the ideological roots of AKP. Baykal's opposition strategy is built on the anti-laicist threat of the AKP government. He uses certain instances of public unrest and protest as evidence of the threat AKP poses against laicism. The public

movement at Bülent Ecevit's¹³ funeral, where over a hundred thousand people from all around Turkey protested Erdoğan and his government for threatening the laicist roots of the Republic, also constituted evidence for Baykal to reinforce his claims of an anti-laicist threat.

Laicism is under threat: There were claims of provocation before the funeral. This may be a result of feelings of guilt. Some people were very uncomfortable with the slogan 'Turkey is laicist and laicist it will remain' and these people despised these protests by comparing them to fanatic slogans in football matches [...]. Now it is time to talk about laicism because, the prime minister and the AKP government have started to endanger this principal quality of Turkey.¹⁴ (*Radikal*, 15 November 2006)

Against all these criticisms, AKP discusses laicism from a different perspective and suggests a new definition for laicism in Turkey:

According to the ruling party, there are no standards to laicism and it is a radical concept in Turkey. AKP claims the way laicism is practiced in Turkey is even more rigid than in France. AKP proposes to develop a new concept of laicism. In AKP's proposed model, 'protection of individual freedom and its unifying aspect' are emphasized.¹⁵ (*Zaman*, 24 November 2004)

¹³ Bülent Ecevit was the former leader of CHP (Republican People's Party) and the leader of *Demokratik Sol Parti* (DSP); (Democratic Left Wing Party), until his death.

¹⁴ Laiklik tehlikede: Cenaze öncesi provokasyon söylemi ortaya atıldı. Bu belki suçluluktan kaynaklanan bir tabloyu ortaya koyuyor. Neymiş cenazede biraraya gelen insanlar 'Türkiye laiktir laik kalacak' demiş, bundan birileri çok rahatsız oldular, bu rahatsızlıklarını da futbol maçlarındaki fanatik söylemlere benzeretek küçümsemeye çalıştılar. [...]. Şimdi laikliği söylemenin zamanıdır. Çünkü başta Başbakan, AKP iktidarı Türkiye'nin bu temel niteliğini tehlikeye sokmaya başlamıştır. (*Radikal*, 15 November 2006)

¹⁵ İktidar partisine göre, Türkiye'deki laiklik 'standartsız' ve 'radikal'. Laikliğin Fransa'dan bile daha katı uygulandığını savunan AK Parti, yeni bir laiklik kavramı geliştirilmesini teklif ediyor. AK Parti'nin önerdiği modelde 'bireysel özgürlüklerin korunması ve birleştiricilik' özelliğine vurgu yapılıyor. [...]. (*Zaman*, 24 November 2004)

Meanwhile, the former President of Turkey, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, has occasionally expressed his discomfort about Islamic fundamentalism and objected to varying definitions of laicism.

The definition of laicism is obvious: Instead of searching for the definition in the constitution, one should look at what kind of laicism is foreseen. Laicism is the essential principle that prevents religion from being a social, political and legal power and legislator. Our constitution prevents the abusing of primary rights and freedoms with the purpose of harming the secular republic, and accordingly enables possible limitation of these rights and freedoms in order to protect the secular republic. The purpose of revolution is the laicism principle. Laicism is the essential basis of all values that constitute the Republic of Turkey.¹⁶ (*Radikal*, 2 October 2006)

The views of the military, as reflected in the media, also involve concerns about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism. The military sees itself as the defender of the secular legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the modern state, and has ousted four elected governments since 1960.¹⁷ The following statements provide an overview of the military authorities' opinions:

Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, Yaşar Büyükanıt: Today our country faces two serious threats which are divisiveness and religious fundamentalism.

¹⁶ Laiklik tanımı bellidir: Anayasa'da, laikliğin tanımını aramak yerine, nasıl bir laikliğin öngörüldüğüne bakmak gerekir. Laiklik, dinin, sosyal, siyasal ve hukuksal bir güç ve düzenleyici olmasını önleyen temel ilkedir. Anayasa'da temel hak ve özgürlüklerin laik Cumhuriyet'i zedeleyecek biçimde kötüye kullanılması önlenmiş, gerekirse laik Cumhuriyet'i korumak için temel hak ve özgürlüklerin sınırlandırılabilmesi kabul edilmiştir. Devrimin temeli, amacına bağlı olarak laiklik ilkesidir. Laiklik ilkesi, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ni oluşturan tüm değerlerin temel taşıdır. (*Radikal*, 2 October 2006)

¹⁷ This claim put forward by the military forces must be evaluated under the light of Kaplan's remark about the 1980 military coup: "On the one hand it declared Kemalism/Atatürkism as the official ideology of the state, of all parties, and of national education specifically. On the other hand, it proclaimed the teaching of religious dogmas compulsory in the school system, thus making a mockery of the perhaps most important reform or transformation of Kemalism, i.e., laicism" (Kaplan 1998: 283).

Land Forces Commander İlker Başbuğ: Fundamentalist threat has reached worrying dimensions, even though not accepted by some communities.

Air Forces Commander Faruk Cömert: Our country's holding cement is Atatürk's principles and revolutions. Approaches that feed fundamentalism and terror will bring disaster to our nation.

Naval Forces Commander Yener Karahanoğlu: I believe that today we should be concerned that the reflections of the individuals' religiously inspired feelings and thoughts on politics are regarded as normal and as a sociological phenomenon. With the influence of such a mentality, anti-laicism is gaining strength and laicism is being eroded.¹⁸ (*Radikal*, 2 October 2006)

Furthermore, social criticism of AKP around the issue of laicism became evident when hundreds of thousands walked in protest in several cities. These gatherings and demonstrations are called *Cumhuriyet Mitingleri* (The Republic Protests). The Republic Protests were a series of mass rallies that took place in the spring of 2007 in support of laicism. The rallies were held in major cities such as Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir as well as in cities like Manisa, Çanakkale, Samsun and Denizli, mainly representing the northern and western parts of Turkey. The number of people attending the rallies was reported as ranging from hundreds of thousands to millions of people in various media sources. The first rally took place in Tandoğan square in Ankara on 14 April, with the gathering of

¹⁸ Genelkurmay Başkanı Yaşar Büyükanıt: Ülkemizin bugün karşı karşıya olduğu iki ciddi tehdit vardır: Bölücülük ve irtica.

Kara Kuvvetleri Komutanı Orgeneral İlker Başbuğ: İrticai tehdit, bazı kesimler kabul etmese de, kaygı verici boyutlara ulaşmaktadır.

Hava Kuvvetleri Komutanı Orgeneral Faruk Cömert: Ulusumuzun çimentosu Atatürk ilke ve devrimleridir. İrticayı ve terörü besleyen farklı yaklaşımlar ulusumuzu felakete götürür.

Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanı Oramiral Yener Karahanoğlu: Bugün, fertlerin dinden esinlenen duygu ve düşüncelerinin siyasete yansımalarını normal bir durum, sosyolojik bir olgu olarak gören bir zihniyetin de etkisiyle laiklik karşıtlarının güç kazandığını ve laikliğin yavaş yavaş yıpratıldığını görmenin bizleri düşündürmesi gerektiği kanaatindeyim. (*Radikal*, 2 October 2006)

people in front of *Anıtkabir* (the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk). The target of the first protest was the possible presidential candidacy of the current Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The slogan of the protest was 'Claim Your Republic' (*Cumhuriyetine Sahip Çık*). Examples of other slogans from other rallies are as follows:

[We demand] neither sharia, nor a coup, but a totally independent Turkey!
(Referring to the statement made by the Turkish Armed Forces and to the backgrounds of Erdoğan and Gül.)
Turkey is secular, and secular it will remain!
The roads to Çankaya are closed to sharia!
(Referring to where the presidential palace is located in Çankaya, Ankara.)
Forefather, rest in peace, we are here!
(Referring to Atatürk as "forefather".)
We don't want an *imam* in Çankaya!
(Referring to the background of Erdoğan.)
Turkey sobered up and the imam passed out!
(Seemingly referring to Erdoğan and as a pun on *imambayıldı*, which is a Turkish meal made with aubergines.)
Even Edison regrets it!
(Referring to the emblem of the Justice and Development Party which is a lightbulb.)
As the sun rises, lightbulbs dim!
Buy Tayyip, get Aydın Doğan for free!
(Referring to the Turkish media's lack of coverage of the Tandoğan rally. Media magnate Aydın Doğan's holding company owns 3 major news channels, including CNN Türk, and 5 major newspapers).¹⁹ (*Republic Protests Slogans* 2007, URL, translation not mine)

¹⁹ Ne şeriat ne darbe, tam bağımsız Türkiye!
Türkiye laikdir, laik kalacak!
Çankaya'nın yolları, şeriata kapalı!
Atam, rahat uyu, biz buradayız!
Çankaya'da imam istemiyoruz!
Türkiye ayıldı, imam bayıldı!
Edison bile pişman!
Güneş doğunca, ampuller söner!
Tayyip'i alana, Aydın Doğan bedava!
(*Republic Protests Slogans* 2007, URL)

The most important motive behind these protests is the fear that secular lifestyles are under threat. In an article in *The New York Times*, written after the rally in Istanbul, the following comment takes place:

It is an emotional reaction to a relatively new layering of society that began 20 years ago but has accelerated recently. A massive migration from rural areas to Turkey's cities and a large-scale economic boom have [*sic.*] drawn an entirely new class of religious Turks from the country's heartland into the life of its secular cities. The class is represented by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is challenging the secular elite, forcing a presidential candidate upon them whom they find completely distasteful. (Tavernise 2007b, URL)

The reason why the protests started at a time when the parliament was about to choose a presidential candidate is evidence of the fear that the secret agenda of the ruling party of imposing Islamic law on Turkey would be secured when the highest strategical seat in Turkey was acquired by them.

It is not possible to estimate how influential these protests were on the decision of the ruling party about a presidential candidate, but Recep Tayyip Erdoğan did not declare his presidential candidacy as feared. However, he chose another candidate with an Islamic background like himself. This candidate was Abdullah Gül, the foreign minister, whose wife²⁰ wears a Muslim head scarf and who is the Prime Minister's closest political ally. His candidacy calmed down neither of the involved parties' concerns. According to a *New York Times* article,

²⁰ Hayrunnisa Gül "won the right to study at Ankara University's Language, History and Geography Faculty in the department of Arabic Language and Literature in 1998. She was unable to register due to her head-cover. Due to this, she applied to the European Human Rights Court; she withdrew her petition in 2004" (Toktar 2007, URL). Her husband, Abdullah Gül, was the Minister of Foreign Affairs then.

Mr. Gul's candidacy goes to the heart of the secular-religious debate, because the presidency is such a revered symbol with real powers — he is commander in chief and has a veto. Turkish military leaders in the past have remarked that they would refuse to visit the presidential palace if a woman in a head scarf were living in it. (Tavernise 2007a, URL)

Public tension revealed in the form of Republic Protests, coupled with the criticism Erdoğan's government received from the opposition party, the President of the time, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the military forces and other pressure groups such as TÜSİAD, as summarized above, set the stage for presidential election and Turkey's sixteenth general election. The general election was the scene of a struggle for legitimacy in the eyes of voters, between Erdoğan's government, criticized for having an Islamic identity, and the country's secular movement.²¹ Abdullah Gül's candidacy for this position, which is regarded as extremely important for continuing the legacy of separating religion and government, proved to be problematic indeed. The military issued a stern warning, after the nomination of Gül, saying that it could intervene if necessary. This warning was issued on the military website. For this reason, it is referred to as *e-muhtıra*; e-warning by the media. In addition, CHP members of the parliament boycotted the parliamentary vote on Gül's candidacy and Turkey's highest court annulled the first round of voting on the grounds that there had not been enough lawmakers present to make it valid. As a result, Abdullah Gül withdrew his candidacy and parliamentary elections were moved up by three months to resolve this political impasse.

²¹ The election results are also related to certain factors such as the years-long dominance of certain party leaders, the poor economic and political governance of these parties and the overall corruption in Turkey, as stated earlier.

The election of 22 July 2007 resulted in greater victory for the AKP government and they returned to power with a larger share of the vote, 47 percent, winning 340 seats in the parliament whereas CHP won 112, MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) 71 and the independents 27 seats. This parliament then selected Abdullah Gül as the eleventh president of Turkey. There was no immediate statement from the military but no military commander attended Gül's inaugural ceremony although he was now the commander in chief. As president, Gül has veto power over legislation. He also has control over hundreds of appointments, particularly to the judiciary. His election places his party in control of most of the Turkish state, with the posts of prime minister, speaker of Parliament and president. In other words, AKP, who is feared to have a secret agenda of undermining the secular state of the Turkish Republic, now has a very strong power base. According to a *New York Times* article,

The election upsets the power hierarchy in Turkey, a secular democracy whose citizens are Muslims, by opening up the presidency — an elite secular post that was first occupied by this country's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk — to a new class of reform-minded leaders from Turkey's provinces, for decades considered backward by the elite (Tavernise and Arsu 2007, URL).

To put it differently, the latest developments in the political arena have shifted the long dominating power hierarchy in Turkey. The conservative middle class represented by the AKP government has moved from the periphery, where they had previously been kept by the elite and the military on the grounds that they themselves were the protectors of Atatürk's legacy, to the center of power.

The conflict between the two ideologies has especially become more obvious and has reached its peak with recent developments. A senior

prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalçinkaya, filed a legal case to close the Justice and Development Party down and ban seventy one party members, including the Prime Minister and President, from politics for five years. The lawsuit, filed with the Constitutional Court, seeks to shut down the party because of its anti-secular activities. Among the many reasons documented for closing the party down, the most important one is lifting the ban on headscarves in universities. Another reason documented in the prosecutor's file is directly linked with the case presented here.

Senior Prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalçinkaya, in his indictment of 162 pages filed against the Justice and Development Party, has especially emphasized the distortion of the stories told in "100 Essential Readings" recommended by the Ministry of Education, and evaluated this as a case of "Islamicizing National Education".²² (Atar 2008, URL)

In conclusion, the first one of the two premises of this study, that there is a clash between laicist and Islamist ideologies in Turkey, becomes apparent when we look at the current state of political affairs. As Kongar, a professor of sociology puts it,

The two main determining factors of the recent socio-cultural behavior in Turkey are the two polarisations along the lines of nationalism and religion: One being Kurdish vs. Turkish nationalism, and the other being Islam vs. Secularism (Kongar 1996, URL).

²² Yargıtay Başsavcısı Abdurrahman Yalçinkaya 162 sayfalık iddianamesinde, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın tavsiye ettiği "100 Temel Eser"de yer alan çocuk kahramanlarının öykülerinin orijinlerinin değiştirilmesine özel bir yer ayırdı ve bunu "Milli Eğitim'deki dinselleştirimin parçası" olarak değerlendirdi. (Atar 2008, URL)

The other premise is related to cultural planning activities and this will be tackled in the following section.

As for the question of which one is the dominant ideology, I assume the laicist ideology to be the “dominant” one, for methodological purposes, as mentioned in the Introduction, since it is the formal ideology of the state and this is clearly stated in the 1982 Constitution. Besides, neither the President nor the Prime Minister declares anything in opposition to this. They rather emphasize their commitment to Turkey’s secular values. In his acceptance speech in Parliament, Abdullah Gül said “[s]ecularism, one of the basic principles of our republic, is a rule of social peace” (Tavernise and Arsu 2007, URL).

However, the 1982 Constitution, which was a product of the 12 September 1980 military coup, is going to be replaced by the new government. Following the July elections, a commission of legal experts was charged by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with drafting the new constitution to replace the 1982 Constitution. The Constitution Commission agreed on the fundamental principles that have to be preserved. The following excerpt is from the headline of *Radikal* newspaper.

The Constitution Commission agreed on “principles that have to be preserved”.

The fundamental principles of the Republic: Respect for human rights, Kemalist Nationalism, “a democratic, laicist, social and judicial state”, indivisibility of its territory and nation, Turkish as the official language and other arrangements regarding its flag, national anthem and its capital.²³ (*Radikal*, 10 December 2007)

²³ Anayasa Çalıştay ı ‘korunacak ilkeler’de uzlaştı.

Cumhuriyet’in temel nitelikleri: İnsan haklarına saygı, Atatürk Milliyetçiliği, ‘demokratik, laik, sosyal, hukuk devleti’, ülkenin ve milletin bölünmez bütünlüğü, devletin resmi dilinin Türkçe olması ile bayrak, milli marş ve başkente ait tüm düzenlemeler.

One possible change that is being hotly debated is the headscarf issue at universities. The country's staunch laicists say that it threatens to create a "religious pressure" in the country that could have a snowball effect. Alkan, a columnist in *Radikal*, for instance, claims that

We are under the strong assault of the religious ideology. The message sent by the wives of ministers and top level bureaucrats, by wearing the Muslim headscarf, is one which is loaded with "Islamist ideology". This ideology is spreading rapidly in the society. Let alone universities, there is mention of the Muslim headscarf being worn in high schools and primary schools. The constitutional arrangements which will enable this are being drafted.²⁴ (Alkan 2008, URL)

Another issue in the drafted document relates to women's rights. The document describes women as a vulnerable group needing protection whereas the current constitution in Turkey obliges the government to ensure equality for all. This was a clause that women's groups fought hard to include. A clause was removed then that identified the man as the head of the household, and obliged the wife to seek permission to go out to work. Women's rights activists see this draft constitution as a return to that mentality and "voice strong opposition to the draft constitution, calling it a major step backwards for equal rights" (Rainsford 2007, URL). Women's rights activist Selen Lermioğlu says "If the government accepts this it will show their ideology and mindset about women and men" (Lermioğlu in Rainsford 2007, URL).

²⁴ Dinci ideolojinin ağır bir saldırısıyla karşı karşıyayız. Bakanların ve üst düzey bürokratların türbanlı eşlerinin verdiği mesaj 'İslami ideoloji'dir. Bu ideoloji toplumda hızla yayılıyor. AKP'nin seçim zaferi bu yayılmayı hızlandırmıştır. Artık üniversite bir yana, lise ve ilkokullarda türban takılacağından söz ediliyor, bunu sağlayacak anayasal düzenlemelerin hazırlığı yapılıyor. (Alkan 2008, URL)

Especially the headscarf issue is related to the culture planning activities of a government with a conservative and Islamic identity. Other examples of culture planning activities which are referred to as “Islamic Society Engineering” are reviewed in the following section.

Examples of “Islamic Society Engineering”

As stated earlier, since AKP came into power, the main issue in politics and in public opinion has been whether there is a structural threat to the secular Republic or not. Although the Prime Minister and the President try to assure the public that they are committed to Turkey’s secular values, the fear that they have a secret agenda of imposing the *shariat* regime on Turkey has not receded ever since AKP’s election in 2002. The following cartoon by Emre Ulaş, published in *Radikal* newspaper on 3 November 2006, before the



presidential election, comments on the disbelief in the Prime Minister’s discourse of securing laicism in Turkey. Here, the Prime Minister is depicted as

distributing a chewing gum to his ministers. Chewing it enables them to spell out laicism and laicist republic. The Prime Minister is shown as counting on this effect for his presidency.

The fear that there is a threat to laicism is not likely to diminish in the society. To put it in Şahin's words, a columnist in *Radikal* newspaper,

These fears are widespread and deeply rooted in certain parts of the society. Although more than four years have passed (since their election), the fear has not receded but on the contrary, has increased. Deep administrative cadres of the AKP government have failed to persuade people that they do not have a secret agenda.²⁵ (Şahin 2006, URL)

This fear arises from the intentions and activities of the AKP government, especially in the area of education. Islamic Society Engineering is a term used in the media for the activities of the Islamists to promote an Islamic way of life. As Şahin maintains, "plenty of examples can be found in course books, municipality brochures, streets and schools" (2006, URL). According to Kongar,

Islamist tendencies observed in Turkey today are a result of consciously planned internal and external efforts. In other words, they are the result of society engineering.²⁶ (Kongar 2007, URL)

Kongar claims that state-promoted Islamic society engineering started after 1945 and led to a moving away from the laicist and democratic order in Turkey. In Kongar's view, Islamic society engineering has gained impetus especially

²⁵ Bu türden korkular toplumun belirli kesimlerinde yaygındır ve derindir. Aradan dört yılı aşkın bir zaman geçmesine rağmen yatışmamış, tam tersine yükselmiştir. AKP'nin derin yönetici kadrosu gizli bir gündemi olmadığına pek çok kişiyi ikna edememiştir. (Şahin 2006, URL)

²⁶ Bugün Türkiye'de görülen İslamlaşma eğilimleri, asla "kendiliğinden" olmayıp, tamamen bu bilinçli ve planlı iç ve dış çabaların, yani toplumsal mühendisliğin bir sonucudur. (Kongar 2007, URL)

during five phases in Turkey. The fifth and the last phase is marked by the AKP government's victory in the 2002 elections.

In each phase, legal arrangements towards an Islamic line were conducted and bureaucratic cadres were formed accordingly, while the educational system was penetrated. The penetration of the educational system was achieved both in the form of islamizing current educational practices and spreading religious education. The investment made in education yielded results in the next generations and influenced culture. Thus, the support of islamist voters gradually increased and will obviously follow a similar trend in the coming years.²⁷ (Kongar 2007, URL)

The penetration of the Islamist ideology into the educational system is considered as the most important move in society engineering. The headscarf in universities, the status of *imam hatip* schools, and the content of course books are the main issues in the area of education.

Indeed, the AKP government's priority after they re-established their position with a second victory in the elections of 2007 has been to tackle the headscarf issue at universities. The parliament with the votes of AKP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) members, has approved a constitutional amendment that will ease the ban on women wearing Islamic headscarves in universities. The amendment received approval also from the President, Abdullah Gül. CHP has vowed to challenge the amendment in the constitutional court. Laicists fear that lifting the headscarf ban is just the first of many steps of

²⁷ Her dönemde, bir yandan İslamcı çizgiye doğru yasal düzenlemeler yapılır ve bürokrasideki kadrolaşma gerçekleştirilirken, öte yandan esas olarak eğitim sistemi üzerinde etkili olunmuş, hem normal eğitim dinselleştirilmiş, hem de dinsel eğitim yaygınlaştırılmıştır. Eğitime yapılan her yatırım, bir sonraki dönemdeki kültürü dinselleşme yönünde etkilemiş, böylece İslamcılarının seçmen desteği yıllar içinde giderek yükselmiştir; bu gidişle daha da yükselecektir. (Kongar 2007, URL)

bringing Islam into public life, slowly changing the face of modern Turkey and putting pressure on those who do not cover up. This fear led to large protest rallies in major cities. However, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has indeed lifted the ban on headscarves in the universities and the newly appointed head of the Higher Education Council (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, YÖK*), who is an ally of the AKP government, put pressure on university rectors to implement it. The latest developments concerning The Supreme Court's lawsuit to close AKP down are an outcome of this issue.

The status of *imam hatip* schools was also brought to the attention of the public, signaling the upcoming issue that the AKP government will deal with once the headscarf problem is settled. The subject which had been discussed the most at the seventeenth National Education Summit that took place in November 2006, was the status of *imam hatip* schools. AKP had insisted on enabling the graduates of *imam hatip* schools to study disciplines other than Islamic studies at universities. The following cartoon by Emre Ulaş, published in *Radikal* after the National Education Summit, depicts the Minister of Education as the inventor of a time machine which sends pupils back in time.



İmam hatip schools, which were established for religious education only, are intended to be integrated into the educational system in order to enable their graduates to study law, medicine and other disciplines so that they will be able to attain administrative posts in the future. As Kongar puts it,

Opening of the imam schools as a part of "vocational education" has reached to a point that now Turkey has District Governors, Public Attorneys and judges who have graduated from the imam schools.²⁸ (Kongar 1996, URL)

The content of course books is another issue which is highlighted in the media from time to time. For instance, the removal of Darwin's theory of evolution from eighth graders' science books in 2005 caused reaction. The Minister of Education, Hüseyin Çelik, commented as follows:

Is teaching evolution theory without reference to alternative theories a scientific approach? Today, there are biologists in the world who defend evolution theory as well as others who put forward opposing arguments. One should inform pupils of all opinions and enable them to reach a conclusion. Otherwise, you are teaching them dogmas.²⁹ (*Radikal*, 14 October 2006)

Another criticism was directed at the way Atatürk's life was depicted in the third graders' Turkish course book. In the reading passage titled 'Mustafa Kemal's School Life', Atatürk is described as being sent to primary school by his mother after religious hymns are sung at home, as quoted in *Radikal*. Özgür Bozdağ from *Eğitim Sen*; The Union of Education, Science and Culture Workers,

²⁸ Quoted directly from a text written in English by Kongar himself. Not my translation.

²⁹ Evrim teorisini anlatıp da evrim teorisine karşı teorileri anlatmamak bilimsel bir tavır mı? Bugün dünyada evrimi savunan biyologlar da var ama buna taban tabana zıt görüşler ileri sürenler de var. Siz eğer öğrencilere bütün görüşleri verip de ondan sonra onun bir değerlendirme yapmasını temin etmezseniz, siz ona sabit doğrular verirsiniz, bu da dogma olur. (*Radikal*, 14 October 2006)

made the following comment: "The aim is to influence pupils by incorporating religious motifs into the course books" (*Radikal*, 14 October 2006). Eleventh graders' Religion and Moral Codes coursebook was also criticized for containing information based on superstitions. The information that the water used for ablution increased red blood cells was of this sort (cf., *Radikal*, 19 October 2006). Another example of incorporating Islamist ideology into the course books was found in history books. The history course books approved for the 2005-2006 educational year during the AKP period were also found to contain information contradicting with the earlier information as the following example illustrates.

The former course books state that *tekkes*³⁰ were abolished because they were outmoded institutions, in contradiction with science and a laicist way of living and that they turned out to be centers of exploitation. The new course book states that they were abolished because new beliefs and customs incompatible with Islam appeared, i.e. because they deviated from the rules of Islam.³¹ (*Radikal*, 13 February 2007)

In the new course book, Latife *Hanım*'s (Atatürk's wife) photograph in modern clothes with Atatürk is replaced by another one where she is shown in the Islamic dress code. (cf., *Radikal*, 13 February 2007).

³⁰ *Tekkes* were abolished on 3 March 1924 by Atatürk as the first step of institutional secularization. "With the abolition of the caliphate and other religious institutions, the principles of political legitimacy were changed to replace Islam with loyalty to the state as the source of political legitimacy" (Küçükcan 2003, URL).

³¹ Eski ders kitabında tekke ve zaviyelerin bilime ve laik yaşama aykırı, çağdışı kurumlar olduğu ve birer sömürü merkezleri durumuna geldikleri için kapatıldıkları belirtiliyor. Yeni ders kitabında "İslam dini ile bağdaşmayan inançlar ve adetler ortaya çıktığı", yani İslami kurallardan saptıkları ve bozuldukları için kapatıldığı belirtiliyor. (*Radikal*, 13 February 2007)

The following example was chosen to further illustrate the content of certain books obviously written to promote Islam to primary school children. It is a reading book. The title is *Ben de Namaz Kıldım; (I Performed the Prayer Too)*. The book is colorful and illustrated and very appealing to small children. It is from a series called *Çocuk Kalbi Dizisi (A Child's Heart Series)*. All five books are written by Ahmet Tezcan. The back cover contains the following information:

A Child's Heart Series is composed of five books. These five books explain the five pillars of Islam, which are The Testimony of Faith, The Prayer, The Fast, The Hajj and Zakat, to children in a way which can be easily grasped by them.³² (Tezcan 2005)

The books carry the imprint that they were "recommended by MEB (Ministry of Education)" for primary schools. What is interesting about the author, Ahmet Tezcan, who is a journalist by profession, is that he was the Prime Minister's Press Advisor in 2005, the year the series was published. Thus, it becomes evident that, Tezcan, who can be considered an Islamic Society Engineer, had the power to receive MEB's approval to promote his books to primary schools. As for the content of the book, the cover and the illustrations inside are quite revealing. On the cover³³ of the book, we see father and son embracing each other on a prayer rug,. The father is holding prayer beads. The story can be summarized as follows: The boy rides on his father's back while he is performing the prayer. The mother is angry with him for disturbing his father during the

³²Çocuk Kalbi Dizisi 1 olarak yayınlanan bu seri beş kitaptan oluşmaktadır. İslâm'ın esasları olarak bilinen Kelime-i Şehâdet, Namaz, Oruç, Hac ve Zekât, çocuklara kavrayabilecekleri bir dil ve üslupla anlatılmıştır. (Tezcan 2005)

³³See Appendix B for an illustration.

prayer. The boy objects to this by saying that his father was not disturbed because he did not say so and the mother explains that he could not say anything otherwise his prayer would be invalid. After the prayer, the father explains to the boy that he performs the prayer because he loves *Allah* and he feels close to him during the prayer. The father adds that he thanks God for creating people and giving them food and clothes. He performs the prayer to show *Allah* that he loves him. The father explains further that *Allah* loves kids but the kids do not have to perform the prayer until they are grown-ups. And then the father and son go to a mosque and the father teaches his son how to perform an ablution and the prayer. The boy also learns the meaning of *Allahu Akbar*, which means '*Allah* is the greatest'.

The following two examples relate to the attempts of Islamic society engineering in the area of education only indirectly, however, they constitute very vivid examples of imposing Islamist ideology on small children as an investment in the future. The first one is about Barbie dolls which are every small girl's most favourite toy.

'Headscarfed Barbie' on the bag!³⁴
Barbie dolls are now wearing Muslim headscarves.
'Headscarfed Barbie printed lunch boxes', imported from China by a Turkish entrepreneur, are now on sale in many cities including Istanbul and Ankara. Educators blamed authorities for their indifference. 'Headscarfed Barbie printed lunch boxes, religious discourse prevailing in the translations of 100 Essential Readings, religious symbols on children's coloring books are getting more and more widespread' said Alaaddin Dinçer, *Eğitim-Sen*; Union of Education Science and Culture Workers Chairman. These

³⁴ This image of "veiling the Barbies" has served as a metaphor for me for the Islamic translations, in the sense of "veiling the translation".

are completely uninspected, said Dinçer. "All kinds of ideological and political approaches are imposed on children by this way. These things have pedagogical drawbacks. They increase our concerns about the future of Turkey" (Dinçer 2006).³⁵ (*Radikal*, 3 September 2006)

The second example is about the board game of Monopoly, designed to teach Islamic rules to children. Its name is *Cennet Bahçesi* (*The Garden of Eden*). The target of the game is to collect 2000 points to go to heaven. The game starts by pronouncing *bismele*; the initiation formula. As the players move on the board they do things such as reciting a *surah* of the Koran or singing a religious hymn and collect points to reach heaven. The aim of the game is stated on the instructions card which comes with the game set.

Our country is 99% Muslim. The aim of the game is to contribute to raising healthy individuals in our country, who keep away from violence, who follow our customs and general moral codes and who are useful to our society in every aspect.³⁶ (*Radikal*, 26 September 2007)

In conclusion, all of the above examples prove the ways in which Islam acquires visibility and presence in the public domain. According to Göle,

³⁵ 'Türbanlı Barbie' çantada!
Barbie bebekler artık türbanlı. Bir Türk girişimcinin Çin'den ithal ettiği 'türbanlı Barbie bebek resimli beslenme çantaları' başta İstanbul ve Ankara olmak üzere pek çok şehirde satışa sunuldu. Eğitimciler yetkilileri duyarsız olmakla suçladı. Eğitim-Sen Genel Başkanı Alaaddin Dinçer, türbanlı Barbie bebekli beslenme çantalarının, yüz temel eserde ortaya çıkan dini içerikli söylemlerin, çocuklara verilen boyama kitaplarındaki dinsel simgelerin çok yaygınlaştığını söyledi. Bunların tamamen denetimsiz olduğunu belirten Dinçer, "Her türlü ideolojik ve politik yaklaşımlar çocuklara bu şekilde veriliyor. Bunlar pedagojik olarak sakıncalı şeyler. Geleceğin Türkiye'si açısından kaygılarımızı artırıyor" dedi. (*Radikal*, 3 September 2006)

³⁶ Yüzde 99'u Müslüman olan ülkemizde şiddetten uzak, sağlıklı, genel ahlak kurallarına, örf ve âdetlerimize uygun, toplumumuza her yönüyle faydalı verimli bireylerin yetişmesine katkı sağlamak. (*Radikal*, 26 September 2007)

Islam moves into public life and attempts to redesign the borders between private and public, religious and secular domains, and thereby challenge the modern secular and democratic definitions of the public sphere. (2006: 3-4)

“A cultural program of Islam” (4), in Göle’s words, or Islamic society engineering becomes apparent through the practices of the Islamists.³⁷ Culture is shaped in conformity with Islamic precepts. Islamists do not stay away from modern life, as expected; they rather “seek to make a place for themselves in professional, political and public life” (ibid). This leads to a clash between Islamists and laicists, who do not want to allow Islamists into professional, political and public life and share with them public domains whose definitions and imperatives were sorted out earlier according to laicist beliefs and values. For instance, according to some laicists, modern life requires a certain (Western) dress code, set out by Atatürk’s reforms, but now this is changing. We encounter more and more covered girls and women in public areas. The headscarf itself makes the polarization between *laicists* and *Islamists* physically visible in the society. More importantly, in the Çankaya Presidential Palace there now resides a covered First Lady. This leads to a fear of change, fear that things will never be the same again once the Islamist actors are allowed into domains pre-defined by the laicists. As Göle puts it,

³⁷ Islam conveys a sense of the *longue duree* history of religion, while Islamism refers to its interpretations by human agency and thereby to its contemporary manifestations. Muslim identity is transformed from a “natural” born-in category, a “tradition” handed down from generation to generation, into a “social” one. Islamism is the name given to this radical procedure; this shift from Muslim to Islamist. It is radical, in that it refutes the “given” definitions of Islam, considered as too subservient, and calls for collective agency and assertion in the face of modern power. [...] The tiny border between a Muslim and an Islamist is hence drawn. One can be born Muslim, but one becomes an Islamist by personal and political engagement. (Göle, 2006:11-12)

The frontiers of the public sphere as well as secular definitions of its neutrality are challenged by the new claims and practices of Muslims in public. As Islam makes a move into national public spheres, the consensual principles and homogeneous structure of national public spheres are unsettled. (2006: 6)

In other words, the tension between laicists and Islamists emanates from the visibility of Islam in the public sphere and its manifestations in public life. Secular values and life styles are now challenged and this leads to an Islamist-laicist struggle. We observe a new cultural model of modernity in the practices of Islamists.

Instead of giving up religiosity, considered a source of backwardness, and assumed dead from the point of view of secularization thesis and Western modernism, they turn their "Muslimness" (similar to "Blackness") into an overt protest called Islamism. (Göle 2006: 13)

Repercussions of the Islamic translations of Western classics, which is the subject of the following chapter, should then be considered within this wider picture. The Western classics, which were once utilized as tools for modernization, are no longer in the forbidden territory to Islam. As Islam crosses these once forbidden frontiers it disposes them in its own ways of arrangement and transforms the classics.

CHAPTER VII
REPERCUSSIONS OF THE 'ISLAMIC' TRANSLATIONS OF
'100 ESSENTIAL READINGS'

Objections to the Selection and Translation of Western Classics

In the summer of 2005, the Ministry of Education published a reading list for primary school children consisting of 100 Essential Readings, thirty of which are translations listed under the heading of world literature³⁸.

The Minister of Education, Hüseyin Çelik, announced in the press bulletin released by the Ministry on 15 July 2005 that, a list of 100 Essential Readings had been compiled by experts and scholars for primary school children between the fourth and eighth grades, following the list for secondary school pupils that had been compiled the previous year (cf. *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL). The chairman of the committee was Mustafa Ruhi Şirin, who is the author of a number of children's books. Other members of the committee were Gülten Dayıoğlu (author of children's books), Fetih Erdoğan, Mevlânâ İdris Zengin (author of children's books), Prof. Nilüfer Tuncer (teaches Children's Literature and Children's Libraries at Hacettepe University), Prof. Mübeccel Gönen (Hacettepe University) and Hasan Güteryüz (author of instruction books for the teaching of children's literature). This committee then resigned due to disagreement with the Ministry. Although the minister stated that there had been a difference of opinion regarding the issue of including the works of living authors in the

³⁸ For a complete list of '100 Essential Readings' see *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*, URL.

list between the committee and the ministry, the chairman of the committee stated reasons other than that (cf. Şirin 2006, URL). Therefore, this committee was not involved in the preparation of the final list contrary to the minister's statement. Minister Çelik mentioned mainly three reasons for not including living authors' works in the list:

- 1) Living authors' works are already in circulation.
- 2) The history of literature is like a river flowing from the past and the aim is to transfer the cultural heritage of the country starting from the thirteenth century.
- 3) The ministry does not want to confront criticisms blaming them of commercial interests in case they enlist certain living authors' works and not others'.³⁹ (cf. *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL)

Minister Çelik explained the objectives for this project as follows:

- 1) Developments in visual materials prevent reading. Therefore reading should be encouraged. (He gives an example from the USA about a program that is carried out to encourage pupils to read more.)
- 2) Improving children's vocabulary and their mother tongue is important.⁴⁰ (cf. *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL)

³⁹ Bundan yaşayan yazarların eserlerinin daha değersiz olduğu sonucunun çıkarılmaması gereğine işaret eden Bakan Çelik, edebiyat tarihinin geçmişten bu güne akan bir nehir gibi görülmesi gerektiğini söyledi. Bakan Çelik, hayattaki yazarların eserlerinin zaten piyasada olduğunu ve ilgi gördüğünü kaydederek, amaçlarının 13. yüzyıldan itibaren ülkenin kültürel birikimini aktarmak olduğunu söyledi. [...] [B]unun ticari boyutu olacağından, rant temin edildiği eleştirisine muhatap olmak istemiyoruz dedi. (*T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL)

⁴⁰ Dünyada görsel araçlardaki gelişmenin kitap okumayı engellediğini kaydeden Çelik, toplumun yazılı kültürden uzaklaşması halinde, bunun kaygı verici sonuçlar doğurabileceğini belirtti. Dünyanın birçok yerinde böyle bir endişe bulunduğunu ifade eden Bakan Hüseyin Çelik, ABDde öğrencilerin daha fazla kitap okuması için yürütülen bir program hakkında bilgi verdi. [...] Türk milli eğitiminin en büyük problemlerinden birisi çocuklarımızın ilköğretim çağından itibaren kendi ana dillerini çok iyi öğrenmemeleri ve onlara öğretilmemesidir. Yeni müfredatımızda bu sıkıntıyı giderme hedefi konmuştur.

The points which require further consideration in the Minister's explanations are as follows:

- 1) Although the ministry consulted the committee of scholars and experts, the ministry had the final say for the selection. We understand that the committee had proposed certain works by both living and deceased authors; however, the ministry excluded the works of living authors, perhaps along with other proposals from the list. We might assume that this may hold true both for translated literature and original products. As a result the committee resigned as stated above. Therefore the ministry was the final decision maker in the compilation of such a list.
- 2) Minister Çelik emphasizes the importance of tracing and transferring the cultural heritage of the country back from the thirteenth century (cf. *T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL). Considering that the Turkish Republic has been established in 1923, what he means by "the country" is not very clear. Perhaps, we should interpret this as the cultural heritage of this "land" where various peoples lived.
- 3) The Minister expresses two kinds of concerns in the selection: ideological and commercial. Ideological concerns relate to raising Turkish children who are proficient in their mother tongue, as can be understood from the following quote.

One of the biggest problems of Turkish national education is related to teaching our children their mother tongue. They do not learn their mother tongue properly. The aim is to overcome this problem in our new curriculum. We are engaged in important projects towards achieving this aim. We should teach our children

their mother tongue with a rich vocabulary at all costs. Generations who are unable to express themselves are not suited to being citizens of the Turkish Republic. We have to overcome this problem.⁴¹ (*T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL)

Considering that foreign language education, starting from the very early ages, is a priority in the Turkish educational system and that many schools and universities have a foreign language medium curriculum, the Minister tries to promote Turkish in schools. Commercial concerns relate to not creating profits for living authors because it is obvious that after the publication of such a list there will be a huge demand for those works that are in the list.

These are only some of the concerns that float near the surface, and therefore are easily traceable. Even the most naively expressed objective such as "encouraging reading among children" would never be free from ideology and other interests, especially if implemented by a political institution. Thus, the list received criticism in many aspects.

Objections from scholars, researchers and experts in the field are usually concerned with (1) short and long term adverse effects of imposing a compulsory reading list on teachers and their pupils; (2) suitability of such a list for children and; (3) the risk of abusing Western classics, that are outside the realm of any authorial control mechanism, for ideological purposes. The last point constitutes the main focus of this study.

⁴¹ Türk milli eğitiminin en büyük problemlerinden birisi çocuklarımızın ilköğretim çağından itibaren kendi ana dillerini çok iyi öğrenmemeleri ve onlara öğretilmemesidir. Yeni müfredatımızda bu sıkıntıyı giderme hedefi konmuştur. Bunun için ciddi çalışmalarımız var. Ne yapıp edip çocuklarımıza kendi ana dillerini zengin bir kelime dünyası ve hazinesi kazandırarak öğretmek zorundayız. Kendisini ifade edemeyen bir nesil bize, Cumhuriyete yakışan bir nesil değildir. Bunu aşmak zorundayız. (*T.C. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı* 2005, URL)

(1) Short and long term adverse effects:

It is argued that such a compulsory reading list for primary school children has a discouraging rather than an encouraging influence on their reading habits, simply because they will be prone to perceive this as a boring task and they will inevitably try to find shortcuts to escape from this obligation. Neydim asserts that, “[t]here will soon be homework sites on the internet for book summaries, questions and answers specifically designed for this compulsory reading list”⁴² (2006: 4). Children will easily find these shortcuts on homework sites on the internet or in any supplementary summaries and Q&A booklets; because once such a list is announced cunning tradesmen will certainly resort to all kinds of tricks to make profit. Other important issues pointed out by experts include the risk of impeding the development of children’s literature. In their opinion, children’s books writers will be discouraged to write new books as there will not be any demand from schools and this in turn will influence the development of children’s literature adversely (cf. Neydim 2006: 5). Other concerns are related to teachers’ freedom of selecting books for their classes. It is argued that teachers are confined only to a list of 100 books to choose from for the children to read (cf. ibid, 4). The issue that stands out as the most important one seems to be the desire to create a homogeneous society (cf. ibid, 5).

⁴² Öğrenciler için hemen ödev siteleri açılacak, zorunlu okutulacak kitapların özetleri, soru ve cevapları ya kitap olarak ya da elektronik sitelerde yayımlanacaktır. (Neydim 2006:4)

(2) Suitability of the list for children:

It is also argued that the classics recommended by the Ministry to schools are not suitable to contemporary teaching methodologies which have moved away from didactic teaching. They also point out that reading classics in schools has long been abandoned in the West as they do not meet the requirements of modern times.

Western children's literature has undergone important changes especially after WWII. Didactic children's books were removed from the reading spectrum and books which are more suitable to a child's reality were promoted. Today the classics can be found at least in one hundred publishers' lists in Turkey whereas they can hardly be found in book stores in the West. The classics are no longer recommended to children in the West. They are only useful for historical research.⁴³ (Neydim 2006: 6)

Furthermore, children will find these books boring because, as can be understood from the experts' remarks, the content and style of neither foreign nor Turkish classics are appropriate for children and their world (cf. Neydim, Sever, Cengiz, Dilidüzgün 2006). The times have changed and so have teaching methods, therefore, the classics with their didactic tone no longer appeal to today's children. In addition, some of the Turkish classics in the list are not even meant for children.

⁴³ Batı çocuk edebiyatı özellikle 2. Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra önemli değişimler geçirmiştir. Didaktik çocuk kitapları, okuma yelpazesinden kaldırılmış ve çocuğun gerçekliğine daha uygun kitaplar teşvik edilmeye başlanmıştır. Bugün bizde en az yüz yayınevinin yayın listesinde klasikler varken Batı'da kitapçı raflarında bile zor görürsünüz bunları. Çünkü temel anlayış değişmiş bu kitaplar ancak geriye dönük bir araştırma için kullanılır olmuştur. (Neydim 2006: 6)

(3) Ideological abuse of the classics:

The fact that the simplification, translation and distribution of the classics are not subject to any control mechanism and thus are vulnerable to ideological abuse is worth noting in the experts' remarks.

There is a grave risk of abusing the selection for ideological purposes. Most of the literary works in the list are either classics or they are anonymous. Therefore they are outside the realm of any control mechanism. As there are no criteria, anyone can compose texts in the way they like and convey them to children.⁴⁴ (Neydim 2006: 6)

Another point concerns the different aims of translating the Western classics in different periods. They were utilized to bring modernization and change to the society in the past, whereas now the Islamic translations tend to highlight the religious elements in them to reinforce Islam and Islamic practices (cf. *ibid*).

To sum up, the selection of Western classics for schools is criticized from two main perspectives. Firstly, they are considered inappropriate for school children for the reasons mentioned above. Secondly, what is being criticized is in fact the act of imposing a reading list on schools. Experts claim that imposing a compulsory reading list is governed by an ideological agenda of forming a homogeneous society. Kaplan, in his work on the ideology of national education in Turkey, asserts that "the whole educational system is homogenized and integrated within a despotic conception based on nationalist and religionist values" (1998: 247), especially after the 1980

⁴⁴ Daha da vahim olanı, seçkinin ideolojik amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılma tehlikesidir. Listede bulunan eserlerin büyük çoğunluğu anonim ya da klasiklerden oluştuğu için sahihsiz ve denetim dışıdır. Ölçütler konmadığı ve denetim mekanizması oluşturulmadığı için isteyen istediği gibi metinler oluşturup çocuklara ulaştırabilecektir. (Neydim 2006: 6)

military coup. He further maintains that, the main concern of the Turkish educational system ever since 1920, which is the foundation year of the Turkish nation-state, has been “inculcating the nationalist ideology into the students” (281).

Religion was considered as complementing and reinforcing nationalism. National and religious values were taken in combination and defined as the spirit or the essence of education. (Kaplan 1998: 282)

Thus, against the background of a homogenizing nationalist education ideology backed up by religious beliefs even as early as the 1920s, one may expect this outcome during the rule of a moderate Islamist party.

With regard to the Islamic translations of the Western classics, experts recognize the religious discourse in the translation of world classics and they criticize this as an ideological distortion. They are irritated by the use of religious discourse in them, which they recognize as ideology. Ideology is placed at the opposite end of the unbeatable notion of “faithfulness” – ideology being on the negative and faithfulness on the positive side. In other words, any translation should be faithful and ideology is something that removes the translation from the “original” and harms it. Cengiz from the Comparative Literatures Department of Osmangazi University, for instance, claims that the priest in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo says *Tanrı* in the original whereas in the translation this has been rendered as *Cenab-ı hak* (cf., Cengiz 2006: 22). Now, this is an interesting perception because the word in the original is not actually the Turkish word *Tanrı* but rather the French word *Dieu*. A French priest could not have possibly said *Tanrı* (in Turkish) in his speech. Therefore, according to this perception and interpretation, the use of the word *Tanrı* for the French word *Dieu* becomes a

faithful translation whereas *Cenab-ı hak* becomes an ideological distortion. The reason for this is that, *Tanrı* in Turkish is considered a neutral word, it could be anyone's God and most probably it is the Christians' God, however a word like *Cenab-ı hak* is undoubtedly the Muslims' God. With the use of this word, the Christian God is transformed into the Muslim God. Furthermore, translating God as *Tanrı* is the dominant norm, whereas translating it as *Cenab-ı hak* is a new norm supported by the ascending Islamist ideology.

Another interesting point in these remarks quoted above is Neydim's. He points out that there were originally religious elements in the Western classics; however they were ignored during the modernization period because the aim then was to use translations of the Western classics as the tools of the modernization project (cf. Neydim 2006: 6). What we infer from Neydim's remark is, therefore, that during the modernization period the purpose of translating the Western classics was to modernize the society and thereby bring about change. Religion was not as highlighted as it is today so the religious elements in them were ignored, discarded or softened by the use of assumedly neutral words such as *Tanrı*. This is an ideological purpose as well. Therefore, neither the purpose determined for any translation nor translating in accordance with this purpose whether consciously or unconsciously is ever free from ideology, as has already been discussed in the third chapter.

Repercussions in the Media

The news about the translation of 100 Essential Readings first appeared in the media on 19 August 2006. It was the headline of *Radikal*, a national newspaper. The headline was as follows: "Oscar Wilde could not have recognized his own book: 'Hayırlı sabahlar' Hans!" (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006).

Each publisher has translated 100 Essential Readings, recommended [by the Ministry of Education], in line with their own ideology. Andersen Tales start with the following phrase 'Once upon a time, Allah's servants were plenty'. Heidi's grandfather has become a 'Turk'.⁴⁵ (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006)

Hayırlı sabahlar means good morning. However, *hayır* is a word which has Islamic connotations. It is a word which is borrowed from the Arabic *hayr* meaning "good (as opposed to evil), good deeds" (*Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*). In an expression like *hayırlı sabahlar* this word marks the discourse with Islamic connotations and the person saying it is recognized as someone with strong religious beliefs because others would say *günaydın* for good morning. However in other formulaic expressions and idioms like *hayrola*; "colloq. nothing wrong, I hope!", *hayrı dokunmak*; "to be of use (to), be a help (to)", *hayrını görmek*; "to benefit from" (*Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*), the word *hayr* sounds neutral, i.e. it has no Islamic connotations.

Examples from certain publishers' translations such as *Damla*, *Nehir*, *Zambak*, *Kervan* and *Timaş*, which are regarded as conservative and religious publishers, are also quoted by *Radikal*. Expressions such as "Allah

⁴⁵ Öğrencilere tavsiye edilen '100 Temel Eser'i her yayınevi kendi ideolojisine göre çevirmiş. Andersen Masalları 'Bir varmış bir yokmuş, Allah'ın kulu çokmuş' diye başlıyor. Heidi'nin dedesi 'Türk' olmuş... (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006)

sizden razı olsun" (may God be pleased) or *Aman Yarabbi* (Oh my God!) used in the translations of *Pinocchio* are criticized (cf. *Radikal*, 19 August 2006). The first one is a formulaic expression having religious connotations. It shows a person's gratitude towards a favour or a good deed. It simply means thank you. The second one, *Aman Yarabbi* (oh my God), is also regarded as Islamic discourse as opposed to *Aman Tanrım* (oh my God) which is assumed to be more neutral. A dialogue between the priest and the bishop from the translation of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* published by *Timaş* is also quoted in the newspaper (cf. *Radikal*, 19 August 2006). The dialogue is about God's justice and performing good deeds such as helping poor people. However, words such as *Cenab-ı Hak* (God), *sadaka* (alm) and *sevap* (a meritorious deed) turn it into an Islamic discourse as they are considered to imply a covert reference to the *Qur'an*. There is also mention of Gepetto's hat which becomes a *takke* (skullcap) in the Islamic retranslations. The word *takke* (skullcap) is criticized because this headgear is worn by men when they go to the mosque or while they are performing the prayer.

In the *Turkish Daily News*, the following observations have been made about the Islamic retranslations of the Western classics:

In one translation, Geppetto's little son Pinocchio says "Give me some bread for the sake of *Allah*," and gives thanks to *Allah* when he becomes an animated marionette.

In Dumas' *Three Musketeers*, D'Artagnan while on his way to see Aramis is stopped by an old woman who explains: "You can't see him right now. He is surrounded by men of religion. He converted to Islam after his illness."

Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyanna* confirms her belief in the Muslim apocalypse, while La Fontaine's fisherman prays using Muslim terminology to catch more fish.

Spyri's Swiss orphan Heidi is told by Ms. Sesasman that "praying is relaxing."

'Invented' phrases employing Muslim terminology were also inserted into classics from masters such as Anton Chekhov and Oscar Wilde. (*Turkish Daily News* 2006, URL)

Three important points are worth noting here. Firstly, the English language offers a wide range of formulaic expressions and idioms with the word God in them, such as for God's sake, God knows, God forbid, God willing, in God's name, thank God etc., and they are not considered so loaded as in Turkish. However, they cause problems in their translations into Turkish. *Allah* has 99 names in Islam and the use of words such as *Cenab-ı Hak*, *Allah*, *Yarabbi* instead of *Tanrı* for God and any combination of words with *Allah* in them, such as *Allah razı olsun* (may God be pleased) and *Allah'a şükretmek* (thank God) and other words such as *sevap* (a meritorious deed), *hayr* (a good deed), *sadaka* (alm), *ahiret* (afterlife), and even *cennet* (heaven) which are linked to Muslim beliefs are discerned as religious discourse and therefore considered ideological translations. Although these words and expressions are used in daily life and do not necessarily imply a religious discourse, they are discerned as religious discourse in the Turkish system because of the dominant translational norms of using assumedly more neutral words such as *Tanrı* (God) as opposed to *Allah* (God) in Christian contexts. This issue has been discussed in the second chapter. In addition, there is a tendency to use the word *tanrı* (god) in the context of polytheist beliefs and religions in the Turkish language. That is how the one and only God of Islam (*Allah*) is distinguished from the many gods of the (ancient) polytheist beliefs. Using the word *Tanrı* in Christian contexts is also the norm. Translating God as *Allah* would then be a new or a competing translational norm "hovering in the periphery" (Tourey 1995: 62-63). The reactions to the Islamic retranslations

are then a result of resistance to the new norms, as these translations are believed to represent a part of the cultural planning activities of the *Islamists*, as has been discussed in the fourth chapter.

Secondly, there is a comparison between the so-called “full translations from the original”, “one-to-one correspondant (word-for-word)” translations (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006), and those that are perceived as ideologically (religiously) distorted. We might conclude, therefore, that ideology in translation is set in opposition to “faithful” translation in the public opinion, as noted earlier. For instance, a passage is quoted in *Radikal* from the translation of *Heidi*, published by *Nehir* Publishing in 2005. In this translation, Peter’s mother and grandmother pray to God when he manages to read in the end:

His grandmother and mother prayed to God in joy: Thank God!⁴⁶ (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006)

This part is then compared to another translation published by *Engin* Publishing which is referred to as a ‘full translation from the original’.

The same passage takes place in *Engin* Publishing’s *full translation from the original*, in the following way:
“The mother gave the book to his son and the grandmother prepared to listen. Peter sat at the table and started to read. His mother was exclaiming in amazement at the end of each line: ‘You can actually read. How could this have happened?’ And the grandmother was listening silently.”⁴⁷ (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006, emphasis mine).

⁴⁶ Ninesi de annesi de sevinçle dua ettiler Allah’a: Allah’ım şükürler olsun sana! (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006)

⁴⁷ Aynı bölüm orijinal *aslından tam çeviri* yapmış olan *Engin* Yayıncılık’ta şu şekilde yer alıyor:

“Annesi kitabı oğluna verdi ve nine dinlemeye hazırlandı. Peter masaya oturdu ve gerçekten okumaya başladı. Her satırın sonunda annesi inanamayarak, haykırıyordu:
— Gerçekten okuyorsun. Bu nasıl oldu?
Nineyse hiç konuşmadan sessizce dinliyordu.” (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006, emphasis mine)

Strikingly however, there is no reference to the source text, although the discourse of “full translation” derives from the notion of “fidelity” to the source text, as discussed in the fifth chapter. The source text reads as follows:

Die mutter holte hurtig das Buch herunter, und die Großmutter freute sich; sie hatte so lange kein gutes Wort mehr gehört. Peter setzte sich an den Tisch und began zu lessen. Seine Mutter saß aufhorchend neben ihm; nach jedem Vers mußte sie mit Bewunderung sagen: 'Wer hätte es auch denken können!' Auch die Großmutter folgte mit Spannung einem Vers nach dem anderen, sie sagte aber nichts dazu. (Spyri no year(?): 152)

The mother fetched the book quickly and the grandmother was pleased; she hadn't heard a good word for so long. Peter sat at the table and started to read. His mother was all ears, she sat next to him. She could not keep herself from exclaiming in amazement after each verse: 'Who could have thought this!' The Grandmother followed one verse after the other in excitement, but she did not say anything.⁴⁸ (Spyri no year(?): 152)

Although there are many versions of *Heidi* in the German language and the one I quoted above is from an edited version by Dr. Hans Hecke, we observe that there are omissions in the so called “full translation” quoted in *Radikal*. Furthermore, the word *Vers* (verse) in the source text refers to the verses in a book of songs for children. This book of songs is written by Paul Gerhardt (1607 - 1676). He was a priest and he was the most important lyricist of the Protestants according to Luther⁴⁹. The word “verse” has simply been translated as *satır* (line) into Turkish, which can be considered as an ideological decision as well.

⁴⁸ The translation from German into English is mine.

⁴⁹ I thank Dilek Dizdar for providing this information.

Thirdly, certain examples from the Islamic translations of the Western classics which have been brought to the attention of the public by the media relate to a concept which is called *framing* in translation (cf. Hermans 2007). These examples quoted in *Radikal* are from the translations of *Pinocchio* published by *Zambak*, *Les Miserables* published by *Timaş*, and *Robinson Crusoe* also published by *Timaş*. It is reported that, in the foreword that has been added to the translation of *Pinocchio*, there is a remark about the impossibility of a wooden puppet coming to life, that this is in contradiction with our beliefs and traditions, and that it is only *Allah* who has such a power to blow souls into living beings in real life (cf. *Radikal*, 19 August, 2006). There is also a reference to the foreword of the translation of *Les Miserables* in *Radikal*. It is stated that, in this foreword, Victor Hugo is pictured as a non-believer who converted to the Muslim religion on his deathbed and said: "I believe in God, I believe in the afterlife, but I do not want any priest on my bedside"⁵⁰ (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006). Translator Ali Çankırılı's preface to *Robinson Crusoe* contends that the theme of the novel had been borrowed from *Hayy bin Yakzan* by Ibn Tufeyl⁵¹ (cf. *Radikal*, 19 August 2006).

As stated above, these examples relate to *framing* in translation, which is totally geared towards ideological purposes; i.e. an ideological device. Hermans refers to two translations of *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler; namely the Dutch and American translations. The distinguishing feature of the American translation is the preface written by the editorial team and the fully annotated

⁵⁰ Allah'a inanıyorum, ahirete inanıyorum; fakat hiçbir kilise papazını başımda istemiyorum. (*Radikal*, 19 August 2006)

⁵¹ See Karadağ (2003).

translation that constitute a *frame* around the translation, preventing us from reading the text one dimensionally. Hence, according to Hermans, the framing of the translation by editorial paratexts “draws a sharp line between their values and Hitler’s” (Hermans 2006)⁵². The *Pinocchio* version published by *Zambak* presents a similar case where the clash of values and beliefs are made visible through the foreword to prevent school children from acquiring beliefs that do not suit the Islamic discourse. As Hermans indicates, “[f]raming is one device for signalling the dissociation from the alien and the affirmation of indigenous values” (2006). We might assume that, in our case “the dissociation from the alien” helps to prevent school children from identifying themselves with the narration and enables them to read the translation inquisitively and the “affirmation of indigenous values” serves to superimpose the values that the Islamist ideology would like children to acquire. The other two prefaces in *Les Miserables* and *Robinson Crusoe*’s translations both published by *Timaş* fulfill the same function of dissociation from the alien and the affirmation of native values in a different way. The first one assimilates the author into Islam and adds credibility to the Islamic discourse in the translation. The second one assimilates the work itself by claiming that it actually belongs to an Islamic author.

The Minister’s first reaction was not assuming any responsibility. He claimed that the ministry cannot interfere in the publishers’ business. The ministry’s advice to the parents was to check the translator’s name and to

⁵²Theo Hermans gave a speech at Boğaziçi University on 10 November 2006, entitled “Irony’s Echo: Value Conflict in Translation and Translators as Gatekeepers” The statements quoted here are from the manuscript of his speech.

check whether the translation is an “appropriate”⁵³ one. Minister Çelik added that if parents had difficulty in selecting the right translation for their kids they could consult the teachers (cf. *Radikal*, 20 August 2006). However, upon insistence and pressure from the media, Minister Çelik announced that he would consider the news in the media as denunciation and treat these translations as pirate copies (cf. *Radikal*, 26 August 2006). Next day, the Minister’s decision was highlighted in *Radikal* as an attitude of “common-sense” (*Radikal*, 27 August 2006).

Common sense at last!
Çelik criticized swear words and religious manipulation in 100 Essential Readings and said ‘if you like *Heidi* write your own *Heidi* and do not islamicize it’.⁵⁴ (*Radikal*, 27 August 2006)

The minister’s remarks about these translations as well as his approach to translation in general were also reported in the news. He believes that “*mot-a-mot* translation is not meaningful. One should also consider the cultural aspects. He claims that Christianity is promoted in these books and gives the example of the church scene in *Heidi* and concludes that Muslims should write their own *Heidi* instead of “islamicizing” it (cf., *Radikal*, 27 August 2006).

⁵³ In fact, he used the words “*aslına uygun*” (*Radikal*, 20 August 2006) which can be translated as “in accordance with the original” or “faithful to the original”.

⁵⁴ Nihayet sağduyu!
100 Temel Eser'deki argo ve dini yönlendirmeleri eleştiren Çelik, 'Eğer Heidi'yi sevdiysen, Heidi'yi Müslümanlaştırmaktan vazgeç, otur kendi Heidi'ni yaz' dedi. (*Radikal*, 27 August 2006)

Conclusion

It is argued that the translations of the Western classics by publishers, which have Islamist roots, are ideologically distorted and therefore unethical. For instance, Türkan Saylan, President of ÇYDD, *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği* (The Association in Support of Contemporary Living), remarks that “religious symbols, nuns, churches in foreign books have been converted into Islamic symbols” and that “this is a dangerous and unethical operation”⁵⁵ (*Radikal*, 20 August 2006). Ethics in translation is a vast and complicated subject.⁵⁶ This subject does not lend itself to generalizations or hasty conclusions. Dizdar draws attention to “the dangers of generalizing faithfulness, which is mostly understood as a strategy of literal translation or even as the more ethical translation strategy that refrains from domesticating the Other, different from assimilating strategies” (2003: 4) and contends that it is not possible “to hide behind an illusion of faithfulness” (5). Ethics can be discussed in relation to a translator’s “freedom” and “responsibility” (Vermeer 1998: 53). Vermeer’s example, with reference to Göhring, is illuminating in understanding these concepts: “One can turn an election speech into a carnivalistic samba; one has to be willing to bear the consequences” (1998: 56). Vermeer identifies three kinds of freedom. The second kind can be related to this case:

⁵⁵ Yabancı kitaplarda da dini semboller, rahibeler, kiliseler var onları alıp İslami sembollere çeviriyorlar. Bu, tehlikeli bir uygulama, ayrıca etik de değil. (*Radikal*, 20 August 2006)

⁵⁶ For a discussion of ethics see Dizdar (2003), Dizdar (2006).

The second kind of freedom a translator can take is to deviate 'purposely' from the 'exactness' of translating [...]. Whoever takes the freedom to deliberately deviate from such a translation, naturally within skopos conditions, must indicate what he does (or has done) and why he does (or has done) it, at least in our SAE cultures, because recipients expect to 'get' the source-text author and will otherwise feel deceived. (Vermeer 1998: 58-59)

Furthermore, a translator's decisions, whether consciously or unconsciously, are always governed by ideology as discussed in the third chapter. As rightly pointed out by Karadağ:

From a functionalist perspective, how could a translation, which is carried out according to a specific purpose, be defined as 'innocent' or 'unbiased' and according to what and whom? The answer to this question is focused on 'power'; i.e., it is possible to talk of 'patronage' in its full sense. From the point of 'ideology', it is apparent that nobody or nothing could possibly be 'innocent' or 'unbiased'. In a systemic structure in which the most powerful ideology is valid, it is only natural for counter ideologies to threaten this structure by other formations. However, to which extent the dominant ideology will / not allow these formations is a matter of debate.⁵⁷ (Karadağ 2006, URL)

This translation "scandal" was 'uncovered' by *Radikal* newspaper, which is known to have a laicist perspective, and the criticism of "unethical ideological distortion" is made by the laicists. The "Islamic discourse" in translations is being criticized from the laicist perspective, which is also ideological. The words and expressions used in these translations strike laicists as odd

⁵⁷ İşlevselci bir bakış açısıyla ele alındığında, belli bir amaç doğrultusunda yapılan çeviri kime, neye göre ve nasıl "masum" ve "tarafsız" olarak değerlendirilebilir? Sorunun yanıtı "güç" üzerinde odaklanıyor, yani tam anlamıyla bir "patronluk" (patronage) meselesinden söz etmek olası. "İdeoloji" açısından sorgulamamıza devam edecek olursak, hiç kimsenin/hiçbir şeyin "masum" ve "tarafsız" olmadığı/olamayacağı ortada. Güçlü olan ideolojinin geçerliliğini koruduğu bir dizgesel yapıda, karşıt ideolojilerin bu yapıyı tehdit edecek oluşumlarda bulunması doğal. Ancak baskın ideolojinin bu oluşumların varlığına ne dereceye kadar izin ver(mey)eceği tartışma konusu. (Karadağ 2007)

whereas an Islamist publisher, like *Damla*, considers using these words quite normal and Minister Çelik indeed seems to agree with this notion. For instance, according to the Minister, expressions like *burayı cennete çevirmişsin* (you turned this place into heaven), *Allahım, Yarabbim, Aman Allahım* (oh my God) should not be considered as odd because the culture and the society, into which the translations are made, is taken into consideration when translating. The minister also attracts attention to the historical dimension of translations by giving an example from Ahmet Vefik Paşa's rendering of "No, no" as "*Haşa ki haşa*". He concludes that such a rendering was quite appropriate and acceptable in his time but today nobody would understand it (cf. *Radikal*, 27 August 2006). *Damla*, one of the publishers that is accused of "ideological translations", makes a similar comment. They contend that "expressions like *Allah razı olsun* (may God be pleased) and *hayırlı sabahlar* (good morning) are used in Turkish and translating the word God as *Allah* instead of *Tanrı* should not be considered as inappropriate" (*Radikal*, 21 August 2006). These arguments also reflect a struggle to control the "word"⁵⁸ in this domination struggle of two ideologies.

Ideological distortion that is foregrounded in this discussion mainly concerns the ideology of the "others". In other words, Islamists are criticized for being ideologically biased in their translations. Milas and Yayla point out that translations have always been "distorted" in Turkey according to certain ideologies, and that this has never attracted the attention of the media and the public.

⁵⁸ See wa Thiong'o (1986) for a discussion of this idea from the postcolonial perspective.

Ideological distortion by those who translate into Turkish is a practice which has been known for decades. However, no one was ever embarrassed or raised their voices about this. There must also be only a little self-criticism about this. When I was young (in the 60s and 70s) I promised myself not to read leftist literature from translations, because leftist translators and publishers of the time did their best to enable their readers to receive 'accurate' information. What they did the most was to 'correct' well-known classical writers' texts by cut and paste and other additions! [...] However, I am suspicious about the last translation scandal storm. What happened to a certain section of the media, who haven't given any importance to such events and who seemed resigned to not saying a word, so that they became so sensitive to [ideological distortion]? Why are they only against 'islamic' distortion but not against all kinds of ideological distortion?⁵⁹ (Milas 2006, URL)

Distortion in translation is an illness which is common to many groups in Turkey. Rightists, leftists, socialists, islamists, nationalists, conservatives, liberals, devouts, atheists... anyone can distort translations. Sometimes they are not even aware that they do it. They think that what they do is sorting out the 'mistakes' in the text.⁶⁰ (Yayla 2006, URL)

What Milas and Yayla mean by "distortion" reminds us of the concept of "manipulation" which has been explained in great detail in the third chapter. Although they both believe that this is unacceptable rather than unavoidable,

⁵⁹ Türkçeye çeviri yapanların ideolojik tahrifatı on yıllardan beri bilinen bir uygulama. Ama bu konuda ne utanan çıktı ne de sesini yükselten. Özeleştirilerini yapanlar da herhalde çok az. Gençliğimde (altmışlı ve yetmişli yıllarda) sol literatürü çevirilerden okumamaya ahdetmiştim; çünkü o zamanın sol çevirmenleri ve yayıncıları okuyucuların 'doğru' bilgi edinmeleri için ellerinden geleni yapıyordu: En sık yaptıkları da ünlü ve klasik yazarların metinlerini kesip biçerek ve eklemelerle kendi inançları doğrultusunda 'düzeltmekti'! [...] Ama son çeviri skandalı fırtınası bana şaibeli geldi. Bugüne kadar bu tür olaylara önem vermeyen ve tahrifatı sineye çeken bir kısım basına ne oldu da böylesine birden duyarlı oldu? Neden her türlü ideolojik tahrifata değil de yalnız 'İslam' tahrifatına karşıdır? (Milas 2006)

⁶⁰ Çeviride tahrifat Türkiye'de neredeyse hiçbir kesimin masun olmadığı bir hastalıktır. Sağcı, solcu, sosyalist, İslamcı, milliyetçi, muhafazakâr, liberal, dindar, ateist.. hemen hemen her kesimde tahrifat yapanlar olabilir. Bazen kişiler tahrifat yaptığının farkına bile varmaz; zira yaptığının "yanlışlardan" arınmış bir metnin ortaya çıkmasını sağlamak olduğuna inanır. (Yayla 2006)

the point they make is important in terms of recognizing that ideology in translation is only discernible when it clashes with other ideologies, especially the dominant one. Otherwise it goes unnoticed as demonstrated by Milas and Yayla. They also imply that criticizing a certain ideology in translation is also an act governed by ideology.

“Islamicising” the translations is considered unethical whereas translating as faithfully as possible is regarded as an ethical attitude, although it is evident by now that such a goal is only utopia. For instance, Sevin Okay, the translator of *Harry Potter* series, maintains that “our task as translators is not to impose our own beliefs but to communicate what the author says to the reader”⁶¹ (*Radikal*, 20 August 2006). “Faithfulness” here should be understood as “in compliance with the dominant norm”. As long as the translator conforms to the dominant ideology, and sticks to the dominant norms, which are tried to be sustained by the discourse of faithfulness, s/he remains invisible. We have to note here that, the discourse of faithfulness can be made to comply with all kinds of strategies applied in translation. It is only used as an excuse to escape from assuming any “responsibilities”, in Vermeer’s sense (cf. Vermeer 1998).

In the case of Islamic translations we observe “non-normative behaviour” in Toury’s terms (2000: 206). These translations receive reaction because there is an attempt to break the dominant norms as in the example of translating God as *Allah*, or as one of the other 99 names of *Allah* in Islam, as opposed to *Tanrı*. In other words, it is this norm-breaking behavior that

⁶¹ Bizim çevirmen olarak görevimiz kendi istediğimizi lanse etmek değil, yazarın söylediğini okura bildirmektir. (*Radikal*, 20 August 2006)

makes translation visible. In the present case these translations also become visible because they are perceived as ideologically distorted translations, because on another level, there is the power struggle of Islamist and laicist ideologies and a political discourse which leads to polarization in the society. Here, we should remember Eagleton's definition of ideology, quoted in the second chapter: "Ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purposes" (Eagleton 1991: 9). Words and formulaic expressions which are used in daily language and which do not strike anyone as ideological under normal conditions are perceived as ideological in these translations because of the persons involved and the fear of their hidden agenda. "100 Essential Readings" is launched by the Ministry of Education under the rule of a moderate Islamist party, and it is feared that this constitutes a culture planning attempt to create a homogeneous society, as mentioned in the above section. In addition, the criticized translations are published by publishing houses which are known to be religious⁶².

⁶² See Karadağ (2003).

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The case presented here concerns the repercussions of the translations of the Western classics recommended by the Ministry of Education to the primary schools in Turkey. The Ministry's list of "100 Essential Readings" includes thirty Western classics as well as original products of the Turkish literary system. As this created a huge market and no copyright obligations restrained the publishers, several of them published retranslations of the Western classics among which certain translations were criticized for being ideologically distorted. This situation was brought to the attention of the public by a national newspaper in the summer of 2006 and the repercussions of this issue have contributed to the visibility of translation. This case presents a good opportunity not only for analyzing the discourse about translation in the public but also for expanding on the notions of power relations, ideology and visibility in translation studies. I approached the case from two perspectives which are interrelated: (1) translation as a site of cultural planning struggles of two competing ideologies and (2) conditions serving the visibility of translation.

The first perspective is supported by a theoretical framework of definitions of ideology, and work on ideology and culture planning that has been carried out in the field of translation studies. When we consider Eagleton's definition of ideology we arrive at the notion that "all of our thinking is ideological". In this sense, any claims of "ideological distortion" are also governed by one's own ideological perspective, because we are not "in

possession of [...] normative, undistorted use of terms” to be able to “decipher an ideological system of discourse” (Eagleton 1991: 14). Thus, defining any belief or value system as ideological is established also from an ideological perspective. Furthermore, one can only recognize ideology when it clashes with one’s own ideas, beliefs and values. When we apply these notions to translation it becomes possible to suggest that there is no ideology-free translation. Therefore, the expectancy of a translation with no bearing of ideology is a false one and, it can be interpreted as an expectation of a translation bearing one’s own ideology rather than ‘theirs’. As a result, I arrived at the conclusion that ideology (in translation) can only be recognized within the context of opposing ideologies, connoting a power struggle. In order to demonstrate that there is indeed a power struggle between two main ideologies in Turkey, I depicted the polarized state of the Turkish society and its political background in the sixth chapter. Furthermore, opposing ideologies dictate translational norms which conflict with each other, hence attracting reactions from the opposing party, as demonstrated in the seventh chapter. In short, certain uses of language in the much criticized “Islamic” retranslations stand out as ideological both within the context of competing translational norms and against the backdrop of conflicting ideologies in society.

The work that has been carried out on ideology in translation studies further supports the view that there is no ideology-free translation contrary to the public belief. Especially after 1985, with the publication of *The Manipulation of Literature*, the “manipulative” nature of translation was acknowledged. From this perspective, translations are evaluated within the

cultural context where translation is necessarily manipulated in line with the dynamics of the society. The selection and translation of foreign texts are always put to the service of a particular ideology so as to shape culture and challenge other dominant forms of ideological thinking. Translation thus becomes a site where different ideologies meet and compete within the same society. The case presented here serves as a good example. I applied Lefevere and Venuti's notions critically to this case in order to shed some theoretical light onto the subject at hand.

Lefevere's perspective of translation as rewriting enables us to view translations as manipulated texts governed by a certain ideology. We also recognize the role of rewriters who occupy certain positions and act in accordance with a certain ideology. In addition, we understand the reason why the classics are continuously being rewritten. In our case, we find a rewriting of the classics suited to different ideologies appearing side by side without any time succession. This situation arises from the current struggle for domination between two ideologies in Turkey. Furthermore, systems-thinking inherent in Lefevere's work requires us to evaluate this case of "Islamic" translations and the reactions to them along with the social and political developments in Turkey. Last but not least, Lefevere's concept of "patronage" proves useful for understanding other control factors which are outside the literary system yet influence its dynamics with their own ideology. In the present case, political parties, the Ministry of Education, publishers and the media can be considered as "patrons".

Venuti's perspective of translation as a challenge of dominant cultural values and institutions enables us to evaluate "Islamic" retranslations as a

challenge of laicist values. Any language use (in translation) thus becomes a site of power relations because language preferences are inscribed by ideologies. This explains the reason why “Islamic” translations receive criticism from the laicist circles. Venuti’s notion of “appropriation” is especially important for an evaluation of this case. The “Islamic” translations of Western classics can be considered as an attempt to impose Islamic values. Laicist groups react to them as they view these translations as a threat which can shake and overthrow their own values. This leads us to the role of translation which is characterized by its capacity to bring about change in a society. For this reason, touching upon “change” was inevitable for a better understanding of this pivotal role translation plays and I devoted the fourth chapter to Even-Zohar and Toury’s notions of culture planning.

First of all, we need to recognize the need to look at translation itself in terms of planning. Culture planning is a deliberate intervention in the current state of cultural affairs by way of creating new options, getting rid of old ones and/or preventing changes. All of these activities are considered as planning which amounts to change in a society. Those who succeed in bringing about change attain power. Thus, “planning is performed for the very sake of attaining power rather than as a *bona fide* attempt to introduce ‘desirable’ changes” (Toury 2002: 152). When we apply these notions to our case we find out that there is in fact a two-way cultural planning in Turkey: that of the Islamist and laicist ideologies. These two groups with conflicting ideologies strive to implement their own models to govern the organization of life in all aspects in order to obtain or sustain power. They make use of “profits” and/or “threats” to spread and/or ensure the survival of their own ideology.

Examples are provided in the sixth and seventh chapters. Translation is used as a tool in the culture planning activities of both groups. Our case concerns the translation of Western classics. The Western classics are harmless – in the sense that they are part of a universal intellectual capital – and are more likely to appeal to a wider circle of readers. Therefore, the very decision to translate them to spread one’s own ideology can be considered as a “disguise technique” in Toury’s terms. The choice of retranslating, reprinting, revising or forgetting about the Western classics “involves a series of interconnected decisions” (Toury 2002: 154) and is a part of planning activities. The Western classics are retranslated in order to make them fit in with a particular ideology. As there are two competing ideologies in our case, we find retranslations of the classics suited to different ideologies appearing side by side, as I mentioned earlier. Furthermore, those retranslations which bear the mark of the “ascending” or “reactionary” ideology, which is the Islamist ideology in this case, receive reaction from the other group. In conclusion, this case study proves that agents of two effective ideologies can engage in cultural planning activities, as defined by Even-Zohar and Toury, not only subsequently but also simultaneously in a society. Furthermore, the cultural planning activities of two competing ideologies make social disintegration more obvious in a society rather than creating “socio-cultural cohesion” in Even-Zohar’s terms. Translation then, which is used as a tool in cultural planning activities, gains visibility.

The visibility of translation and the conditions serving it was my second perspective in this case. I reviewed the work that has been carried out on the visibility of translation so far, in order to benefit from the existing notions as

well as expanding on what has already been said about this issue. This issue is often approached from the opposite angle, i.e. the invisibility of translation. Translation scholars associate the invisibility of translation with its secondary status. The practical and theoretical reasons of this secondary status have been reviewed in the fifth chapter. The "ideology of originality" is the major theoretical reason for regarding a translated text as an inferior copy. However, although this problem has been solved theoretically under the influence of postmodernism, poststructuralism and deconstruction; practically, translation is still an invisible practice. Translation theory endows translators with the necessary powers to play an important role in shaping culture, society and its institutions. However, translators themselves have to claim this power and assume responsibilities to make translation visible in society. Translation scholars suggest ways to overcome invisibility, such as writing commentaries, criticisms and theories as well as increasing the number and quality of translation reviews. They also propose "minoritizing" or "foreignizing" (Venuti 1994, 1998a) strategies for the translation process. Another conclusion which can be derived from the existing notions is that translation can also become visible due to the importance assigned to it in various cultures in certain periods; especially if translation is regarded as a means for the enrichment of language and culture. However, the visibility of translation in our case is only distantly related to the notions mentioned above. Translation has recently acquired visibility in Turkey irrespective of the above mentioned factors. I explained the reason why this case adds a new dimension to the thinking about the visibility of translation in the fifth chapter. In the present case, translation became visible when it turned out to be the battleground of two

conflicting ideologies. For this reason, I spared the last two chapters of this study to providing evidence of the polarized state of Turkey, in the sixth chapter, and to explaining the case itself with reference to the repercussions in the media, in the seventh chapter.

The current state of Turkey is characterized by polarization caused by two powerful (Islamist and laicist) ideologies struggling for domination. They are both powerful because of the following reasons. Islamist ideology, on the one hand, advocates ascending values and beliefs in the society and thereby gains a wider ground. Laicist ideology, on the other hand, has much deeper roots and it is the leading principle in the constitution. Furthermore, both ideologies have their own supporters in the media, in the universities and are promoted by their own opinion leaders and decision makers. Both parties are engaged in cultural planning activities in order to create a “cultural repertoire”, in Even-Zohar and Toury’s terms, to be accepted by the majority of the population and gain further ground. The cultural planning activities of the Islamists are more in terms of “creating a new entity” whereas laicists struggle for “the survival of an existing entity” (Even-Zohar 2005, URL). “Islamic Society Engineering” is the term used for the activities of the Islamists. I provided examples of “Islamic Society Engineering” mainly from the area of education, in the sixth chapter, to narrow down the issue to the Islamic translations of 100 Essential Readings and to provide a framework to evaluate the objections to these translations which are claimed to be “ideologically distorted”.

These objections can be considered as a struggle for the survival of existing ideologies and existing norms governing translation. It is argued that

these translations are ideologically distorted and therefore unethical without realizing that translation always has a purpose and a function to fulfill in the society (cf., Vermeer 2000) and translating in accordance with this purpose, whether consciously or unconsciously, is never free from ideology. Therefore, a discussion of ethics in translation should not start from the wrong premise that, “ideological distortion is unethical”. Ethics can be discussed in relation to a translator’s “freedom” and “responsibility” (Vermeer 1998: 53). The claim of “ideological distortion” in translation implies two inter-related considerations. (1) The claim is made from another ideological perspective. (2) It is only made when a threat to the existing ideology is perceived. As a result the ideological or “manipulative” nature of translation becomes visible, as well as the translation itself.

I believe that this case study has especially been beneficial in terms of highlighting the necessity to study translational phenomena within the context of the dynamics of society. We have once more observed the multi-dimensional nature of Translation Studies. This case demanded me to move beyond the literary and penetrate the social and political systems, in order to be able to understand the reason behind the visibility of translation. The media, as a mirror of the society, has proved to be a valuable source in understanding the cultural, social and political mechanisms within society. Furthermore, in the present case, the news in the media enabled me to analyze the discourse on translation in the public, because it is completely different from the discourse in Translation Theory. Translation Theory has served as a searchlight for me to determine the framework to approach this case and see beyond the public perspective; i.e. understand the underlying

notions behind any claims made about translation. We have seen that the discussions in the public are based on false arguments, such as “faithful” as opposed to “ideological” translation, and that they lead to nowhere. With the help of Translation Theory it is possible to bring these discussions back into perspective. From here onwards a more fruitful discussion of ethics can be carried out.

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APPENDIX A

LAICISM²

Davison, in his article, "Turkey, a 'Secular' State?: The Challenge of Description", where he suggests that "secularism in Turkey be understood and consistently redescribed as laicism", reviews "the conceptual, empirical, and normative-theoretical bases for this suggestion" (2003, URL). Davison explains the etymologies of secularism and laicism as follows:

Secularism derives from the Latin *saeculum*, meaning generation or age, and originally meant 'of the world' as opposed to 'of the church'. *Laicism*, by contrast, derives from the French word *lai* (or *laïque*, in contemporary usage), meaning 'of the people' as distinguished from 'the clergy'. *Secular* thus originally conveys the early Christian 'requirement of distance, of non-coincidence' between matters of religiosity and matters of the world (seen as corrupted and to be resisted), while *laicism* underscores the distinction between lay members of a church, or *ecclesia*, and its religiously wise, clerical strata. (Davison 2003, URL)

In Turkey, *laiklik* (laicism) has been used to define the relationship between the state and religion since the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

The founders of the contemporary institutional relationship between the state and Islam in Turkey named that relationship *laiklik*, after the French term *laïcisme*, and it was, in terms of the conceptual possibilities for describing the new relation between the state and Islam, a relatively good choice. *Laiklik* emerged as a governing principle of the Republican People's Party (RPP) during the 1920s as it maneuvered and battled for control over the reins of the new state. In this context, the RPP abolished the Caliphate, the Sharia, and the *medrese* school system, demoted Islam from its previous place of constitutional and legal significance, banned the use of religion for political purposes, closed the institutions of folk Islam, created a new, nationalist education system, and promulgated nonreligious codes of governance (e.g., revised Swiss civil and Italian penal codes)—all secularizing moves of significance. But it did

not remove religion from the state. The founding and operative institutional matrix is best understood as a form of laicism, not secularism. (Davison 2003, URL)

Toprak, in her article, "Religion and State in Turkey", maintains that laicism has always been at the center of reforms in the 1920s (cf., Toprak 2001, URL).

The early reforms of the republic in the 1920s were basically designed to replace Ottoman Islamic civilization with its Western counterpart. At the center of these reforms was the policy of laicism, a French approach to religion far more militant than secularism. Turkish laicism was very much in the French tradition, especially of the Third Republic, which lasted from 1870 until 1940. During those seventy years, no politician in France who was known publicly to go to mass on Sundays was ever able to enter into the cabinet. The same was true of promotions within the French army. (Toprak 2001, URL)

Toprak also provides a very vivid example of why Turkey has more of a laicist character than a secularist one:

Let me illustrate the difference between secularism and laicism by an example. Some years ago, I was staying at a Tel Aviv hotel, and in the dining hall there was a sign which said: 'Please refrain from smoking on the Sabbath.' I thought to myself, were a similar sign posted in any five-star hotel in Istanbul, asking guests to refrain from smoking or eating during Ramazan, we might have a military coup the next day. This would be something unthinkable, just as it is unthinkable that the Turkish *lira* or the French franc would ever bear the slogan of the American dollar: 'In God we trust.' (Toprak 2001, URL)

As the above quotations from Davison and Toprak also illustrate, the term laicism rather than secularism is used in the Turkish context. For this reason, I used laicism throughout this study except for quotations made directly from English where secularism might have been used.

APPENDIX B

BEN DE NAMAZ KILDIM (I PERFORMED THE PRAYER TOO) COVER

PAGE³⁰

