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TO LAMENT OR TO RESIST: REWRITING SARTRE'S TROJAN WOMEN ON THE TURKISH STAGE

YAS MI, BAŞKALDIRI MI: SARTRE'IN TROYALI KADINLAR'INI TÜRK SAHNESİNDE YENİDEN YAZMAK

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Abstract
Jean-Paul Sartre's adaptation of Euripides' *Trojan Women* presents women's suffering in the aftermath of war. In contemporary Turkish theatre, this classical text is recreated through both linguistic translation and performative reinterpretations. Drawing on Morini's (2022) assertion that "theatrical performance is itself a form of translation," and applying Lefevere's concept of rewriting to multimodal translation, this article examines two recent Turkish stage productions, productions by Tatavla Theatre and Trabzon State Theatre, as instances of translational rewriting shaped by aesthetic choices. The study seeks to answer the research question: How has Sartre's adaptation of *The Trojan Women* been rewritten on the Turkish stage, and how does this rewriting transform the representations of women? Through a qualitative comparative analysis of archival recordings, the study investigates how these productions recreate the source text through distinct performative strategies. While the Tatavla performance centers on collective grief and despair, employing minimalism and stillness, the Trabzon production brings resilience and agency into focus through dynamic movement and cinematic strategies. By comparing these approaches, the article demonstrates how translation becomes a site of gendered reinterpretation that goes beyond linguistic transfer, and actively shapes the visibility, voice, and bodily presence of women on stage.

Keywords: Performance translation, theatrical rewriting, Trojan Women, female agency

Öz
Jean-Paul Sartre'ın Euripides'in *Trojan Women* adlı eserinden yaptığı uyarlama, savaş sonrası kadınların deneyimini merkeze alır. Bu klasik metin, çağdaş Türk tiyatrosunda yalnızca dillerarası çeviriler yoluyla değil, farklı performatif yorumlarla da yeniden biçimlendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, Morini'nin (2022) "tiyatro performansının bir çeviri türü olduğu" yönündeki önermesinden hareketle ve Lefevere'in yeniden yazım kavramını çok modlu çeviri anlayışıyla ilişkilendirerek, *Troyalı Kadınlar*'ın iki sahne performansını, estetik tercihlerle biçimlenmiş yeniden yazım örnekleri olarak incelemektedir. Çalışma "Sartre'ın *Troyalı Kadınlar* uyarlaması Türk sahnesinde nasıl yeniden yazılmıştır ve bu yeniden yazım kadın temsillerini nasıl dönüştürmektedir?" sorusuna yanıt aramaktadır. Arşiv kayıtlarına dayalı nitel ve karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemiyle yürütülen bu inceleme, her iki oyunun özgün performatif stratejiler aracılığıyla kaynak metni nasıl yeniden kurduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Tatavla Tiyatro'nun yorumu, minimalizme dayalı bir yaklaşımla kolektif yas ve çaresizliğe odaklanırken, Trabzon Devlet Tiyatrosu, hareket ve sinematografik tercihler ile direnişi ve kadının sahnedeki varlığını ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Çalışma, çeviriyi yalnızca diller arası bir aktarım değil, kadının görünürlüğünü, sesini ve bedensel varlığını sahnede yeniden biçimlendiren toplumsal bir yeniden yazım alanı olarak ele almakta ve bu yönüyle alana özgün bir katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tiyatroda çeviri, yeniden yazım, Troyalı Kadınlar, Jean-Paul Sartre, kadın temsili

INTRODUCTION

Euripides' *Trojan Women*, first produced in 415 BCE, is a classical tragedy portraying the fate of the women of Troy after the city's fall (Euripidies, 2002). In 1965, Jean-Paul Sartre adapted the play under the same title, *Les Troyennes*, retaining its core narrative and characters (Sartre, 1967). Sartre's version reconfigures the women's suffering as a philosophical meditation on freedom, choice, and resistance under occupation. It features a chorus of female characters who embody varying responses to trauma: Hecuba, the dethroned queen of Troy; Cassandra, the prophetic daughter cursed to speak truths no one believes; Andromache, a grieving widow and mother; and Helen, a figure of contested agency. These women do not simply lament; they embody distinct archetypes of female subjectivity in times of war, all of whom are subjected to and yet challenge the patriarchal structures of both myth and performance. Their voices, silences, bodies, and emotions, thus, form the emotional core of the play. To contextualize how the representation of women has been reimagined, it is first necessary to provide relevant background information.

The play consists of one act divided into twelve scenes. It opens with a meta-theatrical dialogue between the gods Poseidon and Athena, discussing the fate of the Trojan women. The following scene depicts the lament and suffering of the women. In Scene 4, they learn of their enslavement; Cassandra is fated to become Agamemnon's concubine. In Scene 5, she enters a prophetic trance foretelling Agamemnon's death. Scene 6 centers on Hecuba's monologue, while Scene 7 introduces Andromache's despair over her son, Astyanax. The eighth scene reveals the decree to kill the boy, followed by mourning and Hecuba's attempt to console Andromache. In Scene 10, Helen defends herself to Menelaus, blaming the gods for her acts. Scene 11 represents the arrival of Astyanax's body and mourning, and the final scene returns to Poseidon and Athena for a concluding monologue.

Sartre's adaptation has been translated into Turkish by several translators, including Işık Noyan and Güzin Dino (Sartre, n.d.). Over the years, the play has been staged widely across Turkey by both state-funded and independent theatre companies. The study focuses on two recent productions based on Güzin Dino's translation: one by Trabzon State Theatre in 2015, and another by Tatavla Theatre Company in 2024. Drawing on Morini's assertion that "theatrical performance is itself a form of translation*,"* (Morini, 2022) the article considers these productions as cases of performative rewriting. It is crucial to understand that translation, here, is understood beyond translating between languages, but as a process of cultural and performative recreation, where staging becomes an act of interpretation shaped by ideological and aesthetic choices (Lefevere, 1992). By analyzing these contrasting stagings, the article explores how translation, conceived as a form of rewriting, functions as a site of gendered reinterpretation. While the subject matter intersects with gender representation and therefore feminist translation theory, the focus of this article remains on performative rewriting as a translational practice. Therefore, the aim is not to conduct a feminist critique, but rather to explore how theatrical staging can serve as a site of contestation or resistance through multimodal rewriting strategies.

The study employs a qualitative comparative analysis method, focusing on selected scenes from two stage productions. Archival video recordings of both performances have been examined to analyze how the representation of women varied through multimodal meaning making on stage. This methodological approach enables close observation of how each production rewrites the same source text through distinct performative strategies. This study approaches theatrical performance from the perspective of translational rewriting, aiming to establish new theoretical connections at the intersection of drama and theatre. In doing so, it sheds light on the pedagogical and cultural transformations enabled by the multimodal nature of performance.

PERFORMANCE AS TRANSLATION

The playtext and the theatrical performance operate through different communicative modes, each imposing its own set of constraints and affordances. While the playtext relies on language, theatre draws upon a multimodal repertoire. As a result, translating between these two forms requires an inherently interdisciplinary approach (Sağlam, 2025) Theatre translation has been drawing attention of the scholars for long, yet only in the last decade the attention has been drawn to multimodal meaning making in translation of theatre. Indeed, the field of theatre translation began to take shape in the

1960s, driven by two distinct groups: theatre translators and literary scholars. Some viewed plays as literary works requiring faithful translations, while others focused on translating performance texts with an emphasis on clarity and natural delivery for the stage (Snell Hornby, 2017). These early stages were about interlingual translation of theatrical texts. Susan Bassnett was a key agent in moving this understanding further towards a performance-centric view. Bassnett claimed that a drama text might contain a form of gestural language that operates similarly to subtext (Bassnett, 1978) which is interpreted by actors and translated into physical gestures (Ordóñez, 2013, p. 94). This is in line with her idea that "a playtext is different from a poem or a novel because it exists in an irreducibly dialectical relationship with its performance*"* (Bassnett, 1991, p. 99). This is because the playtext's "very existence is predicated on performance" (Rees, 2017, p. 180). This relationship between playtext and performance strikes the attention of the scholars particularly in the early 2000s and scholars such as Cristina Marinetti argued that this relationship has been under-investigated (Marinetti, 2013). Following studies were abundantly explored this relationship. Yet in 2021, Tarantini argued that although this relationship has been explored "no research has been conducted on the impact of the translation of playtexts on the rhythmic and gestural elements of a stage performance*"* (Tarantini, 2021, p. 3). This study, in the same vein, offers a comparative analysis in which how body, rhythmic and gestural elements contribute to the recreation of the meaning on stage, in two distinct productions originating from the same source text.

Georges Mounin similarly advocated for performance-centered perspective in theatre translation, at the very early stages (Mounin, 1965, p. 55) and regard the process as a combination of adaptation and translation (see also Morini, 2022, p. 22). It should be admitted that it is the adaptation nature in particularly theatre translation that gives way to the recreative, interpretive elements rather than focusing on fidelity to language structures. Around 2000s, the advances in translation, adaptation, and multimodality studies created a shared platform to analyze similar practices, and accordingly, the field of theatre translation expanded to include both interlingual and intersemiotic aspects. Sirkku Aaltonen (Aaltonen, 2000) distinguished "between theatre translation, to refer to those pieces intended for performance, and drama translation, or translations of plays that are not meant for stage, that is, text oriented*"* (see also Lass, 2023, p. 123). Indeed, as Massimiliano Morini asserts, it was *Time-Sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in Theatre and Society* (2000) by Aaltonen, that was the first full-length work to combine a coherent, fully inclusive performative aspects of theatre translation theory.

Within this perspective, in 2000s, the translation of drama into performance were approached more broadly, bringing it closer to adaptation studies. Bassnett (2000) and Aaltonen (2000) argued that what may have typically termed as translation in the theatre can also be viewed to include adaptation (as cited in McCormack, 2018, p. 8). The leading adaptation scholar Linda Hutcheon defines adaptation as "a double process of interpreting and then creating something new*"* (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 20). This definition, perfectly fits to the definition of translation too. In the same vein, theatre studies scholar Katja Krebs also believes theatre offers case studies that "blur the distinction between adaptation and translation processes, as well as products*"* (Krebs, 2012, p. 72). Given the idea that in interlingual translation, equivalency-based understanding required close resemblance to the source text, while in translation of a playtext onto stage represent a freer form of translation that grants certain freedom to the translators in the process.

In 2022, Massimiliano Morini proposed a classification for theatre translation. As can be seen in Fig 1.

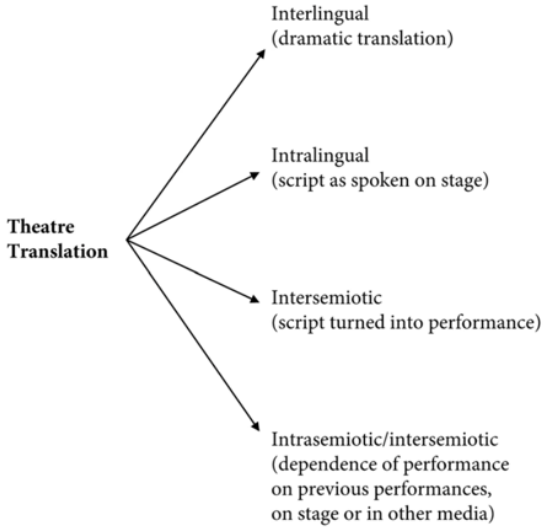

Figure 3 The four aspects of theatre translation.

Figure 1. Morini's Theatre Translation Classification (Morini, 2022, p. 75)

According to Morini, theatre translation can be realized in four different ways. The first refers to translation of a playtext into another language, while the second refers to script being spoken on stage; the third is the intersemiotic translation of playtext onto performance and the last is the performance's influence by earlier productions. The third type in Morini's classification refers to the process that is the focus of this study.

This understanding was developed into viewing performance itself as translation. As Morini asserts:

> The presence of interlingual transformation is not necessary for a theatre act to be a theatre translation. In other words – as an age-old commonplace and all 'text to stage' book series testify (see, for instance, Kennan and Tempera 1992; and from a theoretical standpoint, Laera 2019, pp. 18–25) – *theatrical performance is itself a form of translation*. … the actors will then impose their interpretation on the text from the very first rehearsal, and in a successful run of performances, lines will be changed, added or dropped depending on audiences' reactions. Even in the very unlikely event that no syllable of the initial script is actually changed, the arrangement or use of props, a shrill tone or an ironic inflection will create different interpretive possibilities. (Morini, 2022, p. 112, italics mine)

Thus considered, in addition to the script, the use of light, music, the stage and the bodies of the performers can be seen as modes of recreation in the process of translation as evidenced by examples. To fully grasp this process, it is crucial to connect performance with the broader concept of translation as rewriting, a perspective that frames the following discussion.

Performance as Translational Rewriting

Under these circumstances, how, then, can we view theatrical performance as a form of translation? Although the intersemiotic aspect was briefly mentioned, theatrical performance as a form of translation invites us to reconsider traditional, verbocentric views of translation, that is, perspectives privileging the written word over performance. Instead, it expands the concept to include multimodal transformations, where meaning is translated not only between languages but across various semiotic modes. This shift is in line with broader developments in translation studies that move beyond language-based translation. Today, it is widely accepted that "the question of what constitutes a translation is under radical review" (Gentzler, 2016, p. 2). A "growing unease about the boundaries" (Boria & Tomalin, 2020, p. 3) moves translation studies more of an interdisciplinary sphere. It is

because today, communication extends far beyond language: "Many new modes and genres are used as new ways to tell stories where words are no longer so prominent as they once were*"* (Vidal Claramonte, 2022, p. 3). The task of the translator, which was traditionally defined by Walter Benjamin has gone big changes. It is no longer between two languages but rather between several modes, mediums, and codes of communication. As Gottlieb asserts communicative definition of text and accordingly broad definition of translation is considered as "any process, or product hereof, in which a combination of sensory signs carrying communicative intention is replaced by another combination reflecting, or inspired by, the original entity." (Gottlieb, 2005, p. 4). This approach creates bridges with multimodality studies, which also provides a platform to study modes in their own rights. Meaning is constructed through distinct semiotic resources with unique affordances and constraints, assembled into multimodal wholes, all of which must be considered to fully understand how meaning is made (as cited by Boria & Tomalin, 2020, p. 12). This expanded view of translation provides a platform to explore performance as a translational phenomenon.

Before moving to the analysis, the second lens that will be of help in analyzing translations of *Trojan Women* on stage is Lefevere's rewriting concept, emphasizing translation as an act of cultural negotiation. The concept of rewriting indeed was voiced not only by Lefevere. René Ladmiral (1994, p. viii), for instance stressed the translator as the rewriter of the source text. This is because the translator carries a creative potential, moving beyond providing one to one equivalence (Ladmiral, 1994, p. viii). Similarly, Lawrence Venuti also regards the rewriting process as intricate to the process of translation by stressing the transformative power of translation beyond language and ability of the translator's repositioning role within the target culture (Venuti, 1998, p. vii). Within the context of intertextuality studies as well, the concept of rewriting carries a specific position (Aktulum, 2011, p. 149; see also Dindar, 2022, p. 654). Yet, it was Lefevere's strategic labeling within the context of ideology that fits best to the focus of this study.

Lefevere opposed polysystem theory for its formalist tendencies, proposing instead that translation must be understood within the larger framework of cultural systems shaped by patronage, ideology, literary conventions, and discourse. Viewing society as a system of systems, he saw literature as a regulated subsystem, subject to external controls such as ideology and patronage and internal ones, including literary norms, professionals, and rewriters. This shift toward a culturally grounded model enacted the *cultural turn* in translation studies. In his book *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992), Lefevere claims that translation reproduces not only the words and texts but the ideological and cultural systems. Therefore, translation is a rewriting process. It is related to a source text, yet it is also a different work:

> Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of ever-increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulation processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live. (Lefevere, 1992, p. vii)

The quotation is particularly pertinent to the focus of this study as the stage productions in our case introduce new concepts, new interpretations and devices through their own poetics. As Lefevere (ibid, p. 7) asserts, while some rewritings are driven by ideological purposes or shaped by ideological limitations, depending on whether the rewriters align with the dominant ideology of their time, others are motivated by or constrained by prevailing poetic norms. In this sense, ideology determines what is translated and why, and poetics influences how it is translated. Adapted into our own case, the poetics of two separate companies including their aesthetic principles, and stylistic conventions, influence the way the same playtext is translated into two totally different productions.

Lefevere argues that such forms of rewriting operate not only in translation, historiography, criticism, and editing, but also in adaptations for film and television (Lefevere, 1992, p. 9). Building on this claim, the present study extends the scope of rewriting to include performance itself as translation, enabled by the increasingly expansive understanding of translation in contemporary theory. In light of this theoretical framework, the following section examines how rewriting strategies manifest in the Tatavla and Trabzon productions of Sartre's *The Trojan Women.*

TROJAN WOMEN IN TWO PERFORMATIVE REWRITINGS

This section will present an analysis of the two performances comparatively through key scenes in order to provide a chance to observe different translational strategies. *Trojan Women* begins with Poseidon lamenting the fall of Troy and reflecting on the city's destruction. His monologue frames the loss both as physical devastation and as a spiritual and cultural erasure. In the second scene, Athena enters and confronts Poseidon. Angered by the Greeks' desecration of her temple and the mistreatment of Cassandra, she turns against her former allies and demands vengeance. The scene concludes with Poseidon agreeing to Athena's call for revenge.

The first two scenes are omitted from the Tatavla Theatre production, while they are given a prominent place in the Trabzon State Theatre's staging. In Trabzon State Theatre, the play begins in darkness, accompanied by the sounds of sirens, gunfire, and hurried footsteps, evoking the disorientation of war. Occasional flashes of light illuminate the stage, followed by flickering small lights that appear and vanish. Tension builds through a war-like musical score until, in a sudden burst of light, the women are revealed at center stage, only for a moment, before fading back into darkness. Rather than beginning with characters or speech, the production introduces the war atmosphere through rhythm, sound, and light. When Poseidon and Athena enter, the meta-scene becomes a space where the aftermath of war is reframed through divine conflict. Athena's strong physical gestures and her entrance from the central axis of the stage demonstrate her as a powerful female figure, physically rehearsing a punching gesture while engaging in dialogue with Poseidon. The use of multimodal elements recreates the play with a high-energy opening that sets the framework for a performance grounded in tension and confrontation.

The omission of the first two scenes in the Tatavla Theatre production, and their central placement in Trabzon's version, reveals a clear divergence in representational strategy. This contrast shapes how the war is framed, as well as influencing how women are positioned within the play. By omitting the initial prologue between Gods, Tatavla theatre shifts the narrative into a realm of human experience, centering loss, trauma, and vulnerability without referring to a cosmic order of justice. In contrast, Trabzon state theatre's inclusion of Poseidon and Athena links the suffering of Trojan women to broader power structures and ideological struggles and thereby strengthening the idea of divine agency. This change in dramaturgical decision significantly alters the interpretive frame of the performance. Additionally, Tatavla's removal of Athena, as one of the few female figures who demands accountability for violence against a woman, also erases the subtext of female resistance. With this approach, the production aligns with its overall aesthetic: one that emphasizes despair over defiance, and silence over confrontation. By contrast, Trabzon's decision to retain Athena reinforces the presence of a female voice that actively challenges male aggression and asserts justice, and suggests a symbolic entry point into the theme of resistance that shapes the rest of the production.

Tatavla Theatre's production, thus, opens with the third scene "Hecuba's Lament" accompanied by melancholic music and red-and-yellow lighting. Seven women dance with pieces of luggage that at times symbolize corpses with hanging shoes on stage that may be interpreted in line with the devastation of war. In line with the source playtext, the scene begins with Hecuba's monologue, telling the war and the women's shattered condition. Her lament, sung slowly with emotional weight, functions as an emotional anchor revealing a sense of despair. The chorus of women mirrors her anguish through restrained physicality, light movements and bodily proximity. Hecuba's mood on stage shifts between anger and resignation, and thus creates a tonal oscillation that is echoed by the chorus. As Talthybios enters the stage to announce their fate, the women kneel beside Hecuba in silence. This collective gesture becomes a visual translation of submission, stressing the Tatavla

Theatre's choice to portray as passive witnesses to their own suffering, rather than agents of resistance.

In Trabzon State Theatre's production, the performance transitions into the third scene after a fast-paced meta scene. As the stage enlightens, the women appear with tambourines in their hands, and the space is illuminated with shifting hues of blue, red, and yellow. In a fluctuating tone, Hecuba recounts the war, while the women strike their tambourines rhythmically in sync with her narration. With each strike, one woman collapses, symbolizing death. Hecuba returns to the stage after a brief blackout, to tell the aftermath of the war, this time emphasizing resistance. She stresses phrases such as "I do not surrender" and rejects suffering with defiant cries of "No!" As she sings, the women slowly move their tambourines, this time filled with grains of cracked wheat, and produce a sound similar to that of ocean waves. The arrival of the soldier Talthybios, who announces the women's post-war fate, is met not with silence or passivity, but with vocal and physical resistance by the women.

In the fourth scene, the arrival of the soldier is staged in an atmosphere of fear in Tatavla Theatre. The women seem passive and anxious in his presence. In contrast, Trabzon State Theatre presents the same moment as one of chaotic female rebellion. The women confront the soldier both vocally and physically, and the turmoil escalates until it is interrupted by a military command "Everyone, stand still" as a line added to the performance. Talthybios then declares that Cassandra is to be given to Agamemnon. In Tatavla's version, this moment triggers a shift: the women move toward the soldier in a rare instance of collective physical assertion. This tension leads directly into Cassandra's delirium, framed through red lighting, symbolizing fire and devastation. Cassandra storms the stage screaming, accompanied by indigenous music, spinning rapidly while announcing her plan for revenge. The other women surround her, attempting to silence her by asserting "your mother is ashamed of you" a gesture that reveals both fear as well as a form of internal discipline within the oppressed group itself. Yet Cassandra breaks free and continues her speech in a frenzied tone. Under red light, her monologue becomes a moment of volatile self-assertion. When the soldier finally intervenes, the women attempt to stop him but fail, and in this struggle, Hecuba collapses onto the ground. This gesture of falling at the end of the scene strengthens the representation of submission in this production.

In the Trabzon State Theatre's staging, the announcement of Cassandra's fate is met with increasing resistance. The women respond by rhythmically shaking their tambourines, building a collective tension that intensifies as the soldier, dressed in a modern suit, steps forward to declare, "Give me Cassandra, the King wants her." His command is met with a sharp thunderclap and sudden burst of light at center stage. Sirens blare, the tambourines become louder, and the stage descends into chaos both visually and audially. The soldier is unable to maintain authority and his voice is drowned out by the chaos surrounding him. Cassandra emerges from within the group of females, dancing erratically with cymbals in hand, laughing and taunting the situation with manic energy. Her physicality is wild yet resistant, and her performance draws momentum from the women's rhythmic accompaniment. Raised above them, and standing on their shoulders, Cassandra delivers her prophecy. Her elevated posture both literal and symbolic, positions her as a figure of embodied resistance. When other soldiers arrive, they hesitate to move forward, visibly unsettled by her uncontrolled presence. Cassandra seizes a loudspeaker and addresses the audience directly: "I'll come, but this is not a defeat. Our marriage will become a hell." This final moment, stressed with the wind effects and a crescendo of sound, transforms her into a center point of reclaimed agency. Through combining voice, movement, and sound on stage, Cassandra's ecstatic trance becomes not a collapse, but a confrontation.

The recreation of female figures and their reply to war differs in the two productions, which may require further exploration. In the Tatavla Theatre production, Cassandra's, delirium which may be interpreted as a form of resistance, is met with external suppression by male authority as well as internal suppression by the other women. The stressing of the lines such as "your mother is ashamed of you" can be read as an internalization of patriarchal control, where women act as enforcers of restraint against one of their own who dares to break narrative and behavioral expectations. Additionally, the women's failed attempts to prevent Cassandra's forced removal from the stage by the soldiers further shows the limits of collective resistance. This portrayal reveals the tragic reality of resistance being not only externally suppressed but also undermined by socialized internal dissent.

In contrast, the Trabzon State Theatre chooses not to stage Cassandra's abduction at all. Instead, the stage turns into a darkness after the scene with Cassandra's defiant proclamation, followed by her ecstatic dance in wind and red light. By refusing to show her capture, Trabzon State Theatre production recreates the scene as an act of unbroken resistance. The omission of a physical removal becomes a dramaturgical choice that abstracts the violence and refuses to visualize female subjugation. With this approach, it elevates Cassandra's presence beyond the control of narrative closure. Her departure is not seen as defeat but as a final act of defiance, leaving the audience with the image of a woman who speaks prophecy, asserts agency, and resists containment even in her final moments. This abstraction, thus, strengthens the symbolic weight of resistance than a literal portrayal of failure.

The tenth scene, where Menelaus confronts Helen also show different directorial strategies of representation. In the Tatavla production, Menelaus is portrayed as a caricaturized male authority figure, dressed in a white suit and fedora, with comedic undertones in his speech and gestures; yet carrying brutal characteristics as well. Helen is dragged in by her hair and thrown before him, and Menelaus exerts physical violence without any sign of emotional conflict. He remains as a figure of male dominance, yet at the end of the scene ultimately takes Helen away by the hand to the ship as the playtext affirms.

In contrast, the Trabzon State Theatre presents an emotionally complex dynamic. Menelaus, first, forcefully lifts Helen by her hair, yet overwhelmed by her beauty, freezes when he sees her face. Helen, while subjected to aggression, regains control through her persuasive rhetoric and allure. Her speech frames her escape with Paris as inevitable as a result of Gods' wishes. As Menelaus begins to soften, Helen's seduction becomes a form of power, her charm destabilizes male authority rather than submitting to it. Hecuba, however, breaks this illusion with an intervention that exposes Helen's hypocrisy. Although Menelaus decides to take Helen with him in both versions, Tatavla theatre draws attention to domination, Trabzon represents feminine allure as a destabilizing force. In both, the chorus of women stands against Helen as the playtext asserts, as a concept showing her exclusion from collective female suffering.

The final scene in the Tatavla Theatre production continues its established strategy of emphasizing defeat and submission. Soldiers violently tear down the hanging shoes, while the women, in visible despair, run across the stage weeping and carrying their belongings. The soldiers beat the women, who then collapse one by one, lifeless. The final figure to remain is Hecuba, who delivers a powerful lament: "Homeland, do not abandon us, they're taking us away. Open beneath the feet of the Greeks, swallow us too, take us with them," before falling to the ground. This final gesture, collapsing onto the earth, reinforces a narrative of resignation and subjugation.

In contrast, the Trabzon State Theatre stages the final scene in a tone of resistance. After Hecuba's words to the homeland, the women remain upright, declaring, "We will not go into exile and slavery of our own free will." Their retreat is demonstrated not by collapse, but by composure and dignity. Distinct from the Tatavla version, the Trabzon production concludes with a meta scene: as the women vanish into darkness, Athena emerges from the center of the stage, accompanied by the sounds of tambourines and crashing waves. Poseidon appears shortly after, responding to Hecuba's plea with a promise: "You will not die in their lands. I will take you into my sea." Poseidon signals their intention to fight back against the Greeks and as he turns to Athena and declares, "Pallas Athena, to work!" she responds with piercing battle cries. The play ends not in mourning, but in a powerful gesture of rebellious affirmation.

In sum, the two productions offer distinctly contrasting aesthetic and ideological approaches to *Trojan Women*. Although based on a same playtext, the stressed lines, showing or not showing certain aspects as well as representation techniques differ greatly and thus creating two different interpretations about women. In Tatavla, the women mostly remain still on stage, accepting their fate in silence, while in Trabzon, they are in constant motion, screaming, running, crying, and lamenting. Tatavla relies heavily on musical and melodic variations to convey emotional weight, with symbolic representations

of war such as scattered shoes, luggage, and sorrowful music. The fall of Troy is implied through the women's cries, and Hecuba's lament is accompanied by melancholic music to heighten despair. The display of Astyanax's corpse intensifies the tone of hopelessness, and contributes to an atmosphere of anguish and resignation.

By contrast, the Trabzon State Theatre prefers a dynamic, multimodal staging that evokes the violence of war through cinematic techniques on stage, as well as color contrasts, sirens, and wave sounds. Meta-theatrical elements and framing devices contribute to the performance: The fall of Troy is enacted through sensory immersion, while simultaneously affirming female strength even in devastation. Hecuba's lament is accompanied by crashing waves created live on stage by the women, and the presentation of Astyanax's body becomes a slowed-down, performative moment of grief. To conclude, Tatavla theatre stresses sorrow and submission in its representation while Trabzon State Theatre recreates the brutal reality of war alongside the resilience of women.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that theatrical performance can be understood as a form of translation in its own right. Through a comparative analysis of two Turkish productions of *Trojan Women*, it has demonstrated how the same playtext can be rewritten through distinct translational poetics, one rooted in stillness, resignation, and symbolic minimalism as in Tatavla Theatre, the other in movement, confrontation, and multimodal dynamism as in Trabzon State Theatre. These rewritings interpret the same source text and they reconstruct it in line with their own aesthetic and ideological frameworks. Focusing on how female subjectivity is staged, contained, or released, the article argues that the representation of women in performance is an act of performative rewriting. The female body on stage is not merely depicted but reinscribed, as witness, as mourner, or as force of resistance. Voice, silence, gesture, and affect become translational tools that shape distinct narratives of grief and agency.

Drawing on Lefevere's concept of rewriting, the study positions both performances as ideologically informed cultural reinterpretations. Although both productions originate from a canonical work, they engage directly with contemporary issues in Türkiye concerning women's visibility, collective mourning, and embodied protest. Each representation, thus, represent the realities of today's Türkiye. Additionally, the contrast between a state theatre and an independent company further reveals how institutional context affects aesthetic and ideological choices. By tracing how trauma and power are inscribed on the female body, either through silence or resistance, the study shed light on how translational rewriting becomes a site where narratives are not only re-performed, but actively rewritten on stage.

In conclusion, the article contributes to the dialogue between translation studies and theatre studies by showing how staging can be read as a form of translation that moves beyond languages and recreates meaning across semiotic modes. The comparative analysis of two productions of *Trojan Women* reveals how performative translation functions as a site of cultural rewriting, where aesthetic strategies, dramaturgical choices, and multimodal elements construct divergent narratives of grief, resistance, and female agency. Rather than emphasizing fidelity to the source text, the study foregrounds how translation as performance redefines meaning within intermedial contexts. These findings invite further interdisciplinary research into how theatre, as a translational act, shapes public memory, negotiates narratives, and engages contemporary discourses on trauma, gender, and power.

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