Nesir: Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi 7
Ekim 2024, 1-19
https: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13944050

Nesir

From Polyphony to "Dual Authorship": Transfictional Voices in *Benden'iz James Joyce*

Çokseslilikten "Çifteyazarlığa": *Benden'iz James Joyce* Adlı Eserde Çevirikurgusal Sesler

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the role of the fictional translator and reader in *Benden'iz James Joyce* [It is Me, James Joyce], a transfictional novel penned by Fuat Sevimay as a paratextual commentary on Joyce's oeuvre. Drawing on the Bakhtinian conception of polyphony, the study first notes that the polyphonic discourse in the novel provides not only the fictional translator but also the fictional reader with a discernible voice, which carries equal weight as Joyce's own literary voice. Second, the study argues that the concept of "dual authorship" as used by Sevimay serves to indicate significant ethical implications within the field of Translation Studies. Third, the study draws on Roland Barthes's concept of the "death of the author" in order to explore how Sevimay's utilization of "Reader-God" may reveal his conception of translatorial agency. The study concludes that transfiction endows translators with a fertile ground through which they can showcase their paratextual and extratextual visibility, thereby emphasizing their agency. Ultimately, the study suggests that transfictional narratives crafted by translators constitute part of translators' archives that constitute an integral part of microhistorical research within translator studies.

Öz

Bu çalışma, Fuat Sevimay tarafından yazılan ve Joyce'un yapıtlarına yanmetinsel bir bakış açısı getiren *Benden'iz James Joyce* adlı eserde kurgulanan çevirmen ve okurun rolünü araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bakhtin'in çokseslilik kavramından yola çıkan çalışma, romandaki çoksesli söylem sayesinde kurgulanan çevirmen ve okurun, Joyce'un yazınsal sesi ile eşit derecede önem taşıyan bir görünürlüğe sahip olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, ayrıca, romanda kullanılan "çifteyazar" kavramının çeviribilim alanında önemli etik çıkarımlara ışık tutabileceğini belirtmektedir. Roland Barthes'ın "yazarın ölümü" anlayışından yararlanan çalışmada, Sevimay'ın odak noktasını oluşturan "Tanrı-Okur" kavramının çevirmenin eyleyici rolüne ışık tutabileceği vurgulanmaktadır. Çalışma, çevirikurgu eserlerin çevirmenlere yanmetinsel ve metindışı görünürlüklerini sergileyebilecekleri verimli bir zemin hazırladığını ve çevirmenlerin eyleyici rolünü ön plana çıkardığını belirtmektedir. Sonuç olarak, çalışma, çevirmenler tarafından oluşturulan çevirikurgu anlatıların, mikro-tarihsel çevirmen araştırmalarının ayrılmaz bir parçasını oluşturan çevirmen arşivlerine dâhil edilebileceğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Keywords

Transfiction, polyphony, translator's voice, translator's microhistory, *Benden'iz James Joyce*

Anahtar Kelimeler

Çevirikurgu, çokseslilik, çevirmen sesi, çevirmen mikro-tarihi, *Benden'iz James Joyce*

Makale Tarihi

Geliş / Received
29.08.2024

Kabul / Accepted
17.10.2024

Makale Türü

Araştırma Makalesi
Research Article

Introduction

The term 'transfiction' serves as a theoretical foundation for investigating the intricate relationship between scholarly discourse on translation and fictional representations of translators and interpreters in literature and cinema.[1] Fictional translators and interpreters have remained unnoticed within the field of Translation Studies until the emergence of the 'fictional turn', as recognized by Else Vieira.[2] Fictional translators "live translation and interpreting with the totality of their body and mind; be it in extreme or even existential situations, or during more quotidian affairs."[3] Therefore, transfictional narratives provide valuable insights into identity-related complexities, ethical quandaries, the emotional aspects involved in translation, as well as the intricate dynamics existing between translators and authors.

Transfiction gives rise to "a major turnabout in Translation Studies, both conceptually and methodologically, since it does not look at fiction as raw material to be translated but singles out and engages with its epistemological potential to (re)think translation."[4] More to the point, whereas transfictional narratives "can openly speak out on manipulation and emotional involvement," scholarly engagements are inclined to "dissolve life into data" and, thus, to the "dehumanization of theories and concepts."[5] In this context, it is safe to state that fictional narratives about translators serve as a privileged avenue for humanizing translation.[6]

Given that translation has long been perceived as a derivative task, characterized by mere reproduction, in contrast to the writing of 'original' content,[7] translators have often been regarded as subservient individuals, generally invisible in nature, who fade into the background as they (re)compose the words of the author. Since contemporary academic research necessitates the

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1 Dirk Delabastita and Rainier Grutman, *Linguistica Antverpiensia* 4, (2005). Dirk Delabastita, "Fictional representations," In *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, eds. Mona Baker and Gabriela Sandanha (London: Routledge, 2009), 109. Judy Wakabayashi, "Fictional representations of author-translator relationships," *Translation Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011): 87. Klaus Kaindl, "Representation of translators and interpreters," In *Handbook of Translation Studies* 3, eds. Y. Gambier and L. van Doorslaer (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012). Kalus Kaindl and Karlheinz María Constanza Spitzl, *Transfiction: Research into the realities of translation fiction* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012). Rosemary Arrojo, *Fictional Translators. Rethinking Translation through Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

2 Else Ribeiro Pires Vieira, "(In) visibilities in Translation: Exchanging Theoretical and Fictional Perspectives," *ComTextos*, 6 (1995): 51.

3 Karlheinz Spitzl, "A Hitchhiker's Guide to … What to expect and where to start from," In *Transfiction: Research into the Realities of Translation Fiction*, eds. Klaus Kaindl and Karlheinz Spitzl (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014), 365.

4 Andrea Bergantino, "Book Review," *Perspectives* 31, no. 4 (2023): 764.

5 Spitzl, "A Hitchhiker's Guide to … What to expect and where to start from," 365.

6 Bergantino, "Book Review," 766.

7 Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation," *Signs* 13, no. 3 (1988).

portrayal of translators and interpreters as "social beings,"[8] fictional translators and interpreters are currently considered more than "interlingual photocopiers," but seen as agents who "live and operate in complex sociocultural contexts."[9] Fictional texts that feature translators and interpreters as characters are also conducive to "highlighting the presence rather than the absence of the translator."[10] In this context, translators and interpreters have transitioned from a marginalised position to becoming characters or protagonists within transfictional narratives.[11]

Transfictional narratives typically function as postmodern works, as they challenge the boundaries between reality and fiction through the use of parody, unconventional narrative structures, and playful elements. Against the backdrop of these points, this study explores Fuat Sevimay's transfictional novel *Benden'iz James Joyce* (hereafter *Benden'iz*),[12] which draws inspiration from the literary oeuvre of Joyce.[13] Sevimay is a scholar and translator with experience in translating the literary works of James Joyce, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde from English, as well as Luigi Pirandello and Italo Svevo from Italian.[14] His translation of *Finnegans Wake*, titled *Finnegan Uyanması*, garnered recognition with the 2017 Talât Sait Halman Translation Award.[15] He wrote a book in the workshop series called *Çeviri'Bilirsin*, which includes extensive commentary on his translations. Additionally, he is the author of several books, including *Aynalı* and *AnarŞık*.[16]

Set on June 16, the day of *Ulysses*, which signifies Joyce's initial encounter with Nora in 1904, subsequently leading to their marriage, *Benden'iz* skillfully interweaves the Gezi Park events of 2013 with elements of magical realism. In *Benden'iz*, Joyce, having risen from his grave, arrives in modern-day Istanbul and meets another protagonist known as the 'Translator'. Together, they engage in discussions regarding the layers of meaning in Joyce's works and his artistic perspective, as presented in his books. The narrative techniques and settings in *Benden'iz* bear similarities to *Ulysses*. It is noteworthy that on June 16, the *Ulysses* protagonists, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, navigate the thoroughfares of Dublin, thereby reflecting Joyce and the fictional translator's meanderings in the streets of Istanbul. Locations such as Martello Tower-Galata Tower, Pub-Türküevi, and Cemetery-Hamam exhibit striking parallels. By juxtaposing the

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8 Theo Hermans, "The translator's voice in translated narrative," *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies* 8, no. 1 (1996): 26.

9 Marko Miletich, "Dragomans gaining footing: Translators as usurpers in two stories by Rodolfo Walsh and Moacyr Scliar," *Hikma*, no. 17 (2018): 175.

10 Rita Wilson, "The fiction of the translator," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 28, no. 4 (2007): 393.

11 Hans Christian Hagedorn, *La traducción narrada: el recurso narrativo de la traducción ficticia* (Univ de Castilla La Mancha, 2006), 210.

12 Fuat Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce* (İstanbul: İthaki, 2020).

13 Although *Benden'iz* is intricately linked to Joyce's life and his works (i.e., *Dubliners, Portrait, Ulysses, and The Finnegan Wake*), *Ulysses* stands out as the most intensively focused.

14 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, n.p.

15 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce,* n.p.

16 Fuat Sevimay, *Aynalı* (İstanbul: İthaki, 2011). Fuat Sevimay, *AnarŞık* (İstanbul: İthaki, 2022).

fictional translator with Joyce, the novel takes Turkish readers on a captivating journey across different temporal dimensions, exploring the dynamic relationship between Istanbul and Dublin.

Benden'iz can be regarded as a work of postmodern literature since it deconstructs traditional narrative techniques through the use of non-linear timelines.[17] The author's role is interrogated throughout the book. Sevimay deliberately disavows the notion of crafting a literary piece that is credited solely to the author.[18] For instance, following the initial chapter, the fictional editor reviewing the manuscript at the publishing house expresses skepticism towards the author (i.e., Sevimay) and subsequently assigns a file to a scholar specialized in Joyce, tasking her with subjecting the novel to the authenticity of footnotes. Consequently, the reader can ascertain the origins of the intertextual allusions, proper nouns, verses, ideas, and citations within *Benden'iz*.

The central objective of Sevimay's book is to function as a companion for the literary works of Joyce.[19] The book seeks to debunk the prevailing belief that Joyce is incomprehensible, highly esteemed, but impenetrable.[20] The fictional translator, who delves into Joyce's formative years and offers valuable insights into his writing process, plays a significant role in acquainting Turkish readers with Joyce's works. Furthermore, Joyce assumes the role of a fictional character to narrate the process of writing his own works. Additionally, various ideas from *Ulysses* are incorporated into *Benden'iz*, while the final chapter of the latter captivates readers with a striking fifteen-page stream of consciousness narration that is devoid of punctuation marks. Finally, the epilogue engages the reader, adding further depth to the overall reading experience.

Sevimay considers that Joyce's literary works in general and *Ulysses* in particular are founded upon the idea of fostering a connection between the reader and literature.[21] He emphasizes that the purpose of literature, in its narrowest sense, and art, in its broadest sense, is to expand the horizons of the public and the readership alike by allowing for a contemplative space wherein the reader can critically examine their interpretative role.[22] This is the reason Sevimay introduces a fictional translator and reader who engage in a dialogic relationship with Joyce, each on equal footing with each other in having the right to express themselves. In this context, Joyce engages in discussions of his writings with the fictional reader, noting the following:[23]

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17 Turhan Yıldırım, "*Benden'iz James Joyc*e," *Kitap Haber*, September 19, 2022, https://www.kitaphaber.com.tr/bendeniz-james-joyce-fuat-sevimay-k5046.html

18 Yakup Öztürk, "James Joyce kılavuzu ve İstanbul," *Yeni Şafak*, September 15, 2020, https://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/james-joyce-kilavuzu-ve-istanbul-3553175

19 Öztürk, "James Joyce kılavuzu ve İstanbul."

20 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Gamze Akdemir, *Cumhuriyet*, September 13, 2021. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/bendeniz-james-joyce-1867494

21 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.

22 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Gülşen İşeri, *Gazete Duvar*, August 3, 2020, https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/kitap/2020/08/03/fuat-sevimay-yeteneksizlik-ambalaji-icinde-marifet-gibi-dolaniyor

23 All translations from Turkish are credited to the author of this manuscript, unless otherwise stated.

> [w]hen I was writing, I wanted everyone to read, from car drivers to waiters, from labourers to shopkeepers, for art to meet the public. I desired that all individuals, rich and poor, were cognizant of their own status as the protagonist. But the elitist crew say that only they know, read and understand Joyce […]. [They claim that] one can never fully understand *Ulysses* unless one knows *Odysseas* or Shakespeare. In order to read *Portrait*, one has to know Aristotle's logic, philosophy and even Christian theology? […] But everyone has it in their hands. It stands like an ornament on the bookshelf.[24]

In this context, Sevimay argues that the significance of literature is compromised when novels are limited to an exclusive, elitist group, emphasizing the need to establish a relationship between literature and the reading public that transcends such hiearchial boundaries.[25] Therefore, Sevimay believes that it is essential for Joyce to address the reader directly in *Benden'iz*, regardless of the setting- whether it be a bathhouse, a tavern, or even in public.[26] In light of these points, the present study examines how Sevimay orchestrates the various narrative voices in *Benden'iz* and how his book intimates his ethical considerations regarding translation, particularly in relation to the works of a prominent author like Joyce. The structure of the study is organized as follows: Following the introductory section, a comprehensive overview of the concept of the 'translator's voice' is provided. The second section explores the polyphony in *Benden'iz*. The third section utilizes the concept of 'the death of the author' to delve into Sevimay's portrayal of the reader's role in literature and thereby in literary translation. The fourth section argues that transfictional narratives crafted by translators constitute part of translators' archieves that serve as an integral component of microhistorical research within translator studies. In the concluding section, general remarks are offered to address the research questions.

Constructing Polyphony through the Fictional Translator

The Translator's Voice

The concept of the 'translator's voice' focuses on the translator's discursive presence within a translated text.[27] Tracing the voice of the translator not only allows for an exploration of the translator's subjectivity, but also offers a vantage point from which one can effectively analyze the implications of the interconnectedness between the translator's language choices and subject positions. Lawrence Venuti argues that "[t]he voice that the reader hears in any translation made on the basis of simpatico is always recognized as the author's, never as a translator's, nor even as some hybrid of the two."[28] Therefore, Theo Hermans asserts that the 'translator's voice' serves as an "index of the translator's discursive presence" (i.e., visibility) in instances where they are

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24 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 13-14.
25 Sevimay, interview by İşeri.
26 Sevimay, interview by İşeri.
27 Lawrence Venuti, *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation* (London: Routledge, 1995).
28 Venuti, *The translator's invisibility*, 238.

required "to come out of the shadows and directly intervene in a text which the reader had been led to believe spoke only with one voice."[29] The textual manifestations of the 'translator's voice' rely on the translator's subjective positions within translation, an analysis of which can be performed through comparisons between the source and target texts. Given that "all translating can be seen to have the translator's subject position inscribed in it,"[30] any translation that reflects the translator's voice, including their interpretative choices and distinctive style, serves to enhance their visibility.

The paratextual manifestations of the translator's voice encompass various documents, such as the translator's preface, notes, and interviews. The translator's voice as a symbolic representation of the translator's paratextual commentaries can be identified in three instances: (i) where the text's orientation towards an implied reader and its effectiveness as a means of communication are directly relevant; (ii) where the medium of communication itself is involved in self-reflexivity and self-referentiality; and (iii) where "'contextual over-determination' leaves no other option."[31] In this context, the paratextual presence of the translator is of utmost importance, since

> [t]he visible translator who is conscious of his or her role and who makes as explicit as possible the motivations, allegiances, and compromises of his or her interpretation is also the translator who must take responsibility for the texts he or she produces, as it is impossible to hide behind the anonymity of the ideal 'invisibility' which has allegedly been given up.[32]

According to Koskinen, in addition to textual and paratextual visibility, translators also need extratextual visibility, which encompasses the translator's presence extending beyond the translation process.[33] Extratextual visibility elucidates the positioning of translators' identity and status beyond the texts they produce. This form of visibility holds equal weight as textual and paratextual visibility, as it unveils the perception of translators among the reading public, highlighting their roles as co-creators of translated works.

Schiavi examines the concept of the 'translator's voice' in terms of translated narrative, positing that the voice of the translator embodies the translator's interpretation of the source text.[34] Building upon the narratological notion of the 'implied author,' Schiavi introduces the term 'implied translator' to refer to the target reader's interpretation of the translator's discursive role,

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29 Hermans, "The translator's voice in translated narrative," 27.

30 Theo Hermans, "Positioning translators: Voices, views and values in translation," *Language and Literature* 23, no. 3 (2014): 286.

31 Hermans, "The translator's voice in translated narrative," 23.

32 Rosemary Arrojo, "Asymmetrical relations of power and the ethics of translation," *TEXTconTEXT* 11, no. 1 (1997): 18.

33 Kaisa Koskinen, *Beyond Ambivalence: Postmodernity and the Ethics of Translation* (Tampere University Press, 2000).

34 Giuliana Schiavi, "There is always a teller in a tale," *Target*. *International Journal of Translation Studies* 8, no. 1 (1996): 1.

which also foregrounds the significant role of the implied reader.[35] According to Schiavi, the translator engages in the interpretation of the source text and employs specific strategies, leading to the formation of a distinct relationship between the translation and its intended audience.[36] Consequently, the implied translator shapes a different implied reader compared to that of the source text.

In the context of the present study, it is reasonable to argue that Sevimay portrays the fictional translator as a narrative device. He demonstrates that the fictional translator serves as the implied translator of various works of Joyce and embodies a dialogic connection with him.[37] The fictional translator's engagement with Joyce's formative years, coupled with the latter's meticulous documentation of the former's recommendations, exemplifies a deliberate endeavor to establish a symbiotic relationship with the author.[38] For instance, in response to Joyce's inquiry regarding the optimal starting point for his writing,[39] the fictional translator proffers the ensuing recommendations:

> If you intend to compose the narrative of the dying priest, it may be advisable to entitle it "The Sisters"** considering his hypocritical sisters. Given that their ambivalence towards the priest aptly mirrors the broader social attitudes, it is essential to unveil the concealed aspects while recounting the experiences of the priest and expose those individuals who clandestinely infiltrate various facets of society. Such an approach aligns with the requirements of contemporary art and contributes to the overall mood that the priest achieves through the shattering of the chalice within the crypt. The presence and symbolism of the chalice, particularly when it is fractured, assume a significant role in the narrative. Therefore, it is imperative that you skillfully incorporate these elements into your text […].[40]

Following the translator's recommendations, Joyce considers that "[w]hoever this man may be and wherever he emerged from unexpectedly, this enigmatic individual who identifies as a translator undeniably facilitated a modest revelation" for him.[41] This grants the fictional translator greater agency to assert his presence to Joyce through the following words:

> They are attempting to replace the void within the human spirit with either nationalism, religion, or alcohol, to find solace amidst the prevailing sense of desperation. This is generally the underlying emotional sentiment of literary works. The prevailing spirit, born out of their desperate circumstances, permeates society like a gangrene. This can be observed worldwide. Therefore, you need to portray individuals singing nationalist anthems in the streets, with a particular emphasis on the vacuous nationalism exhibited by fathers. However, it is important to note that your own father does not possess such sentiments, so refrain from casting judgment upon him. He is the same man who takes pride in

35 Schiavi, "There is always a teller in a tale," 7.
36 Schiavi, "There is always a teller in a tale," 9.
37 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 504.
38 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Gamze Akdemir, *Cumhuriyet*, September 13, 2021. https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/bendeniz-james-joyce-1867494
39 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 51.
40 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 53.
41 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 54.

> seeing you off to school and offers whatever he can spare from his own pocket. [...] Nonetheless, it is crucial to avoid directly injecting politics into your works. […] Never, under any circumstances, should a work be used as a platform for propagating slogans. One should always bear this principle in mind.[42]

At this juncture, it is worth noting that the fictional translator foregrounds Sevimay's extratextual visibility by foregrounding his professional presence. That is, the inclusion of the fictional translator in *Benden'iz* establishes Sevimay's translatorial identity and authority, thus raising his public profile. The fictional translator also serves to underscore Sevimay's paratextual (i.e., epitextual) visibility by offering some commentary on his translation of Joyce's works. For instance, the fictional translator notes that he translates Joyce's texts by envisioning how Joyce would have crafted his writing in Turkish.[43] Likewise, Sevimay highlights his contemplation of a hypothetical scenario in which Joyce possessed proficiency in the Turkish language, underlining that such a scenario helps him engage in collaboration with Joyce (Aydın 2020).[44] To offer a brief recap of the argument thus far, since Sevimay filters Joyce's voice through his own interpretation of how the latter would express his work in Turkish, the process of filtration encompasses the former's translatorial voice.

Polyphony in *Benden'iz*

The term 'polyphony' was initially introduced by the Russian philosopher, linguist, and critic Mikhail Bakhtin to the realms of literary criticism and social literary theories, drawing inspiration from the musical concepts of monophony, homophony, and polyphony. Polyphony is a narrative characteristic that enables a democratic interplay of multiple voices and perspectives, in contrast to a singular and unified vision in the novel. For instance, one distinguishing feature of Dostoevsky's novels is a multitude of distinct and autonomous voices, forming a truly polyphonic composition of equally authoritative voices.[45] Polyphonic novels embrace the use of multiple narrators to disallow a singular viewpoint on the storyline and to allocate textual authority to a variety of narrators. Each narrator, through their individual 'I', possesses the capacity to articulate their own unique standpoint. Hence, they collaborate in a manner that results in the emergence of "not a multitude of authorial consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousness, with equal rights and each with its own world."[46]

A compelling example can be found in Joyce's *Ulysses*, where the strategic implementation of polyphony (i.e., the juxtaposition of Molly's voice with those of Bloom and Stephen) grants

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42 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 59-60.
43 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 401-402.
44 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Canan Aydın*, K24 Kitap*, August 6, 2020, https://www.k24kitap.org/james-joyce-istanbulda-edebiyat-yeri-geldiginde-fevkalade-capulcudur-2670
45 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics* (Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 1984), 6-7.
46 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics,* 6.

equal weight to a woman's voice in illuminating the storyline. Hence, the reader is compelled to go beyond relying solely on the voices of the male characters. It is worth noting that polyphony operates effectively in Joyce's works in order to disrupt what Bakhtin defines as "the monologic plane."[47] In a similar line of thought, Sevimay constructs *Benden'iz* as a polyphonic novel by juxtaposing the fictional translator's voice with that of Joyce, which empowers him to exercise authority over the narrative, in which he becomes a "fully valid, autonomous carrier" of his own word, to use Bakhtin's words.[48] Put differently, the translator's explanation of "himself and of the world is as weighty as the traditional authorial discourse," as Bakhtin would argue.[49]

Akin to Joyce, who strongly opposes various forms of power, including the condescending and didactic nature often found in literature,[50] Sevimay contends that constructing an authorial voice that guides the reader through prescriptive statements on how to interpret Joyce's works would be fundamentally inappropriate within the context of *Benden'iz*.[51] Hence, he employs Joyce's fictional voice to present a narrative perspective that encourages the reader's active involvement with the text, without prescribing how they should read his works. This is exemplified in the following paragraph, where Sevimay abstains from offering explicit instructions to the reader concerning the appropriate approach to reading Joyce's *Dubliners*. Instead, the fictional translator asks Joyce to express his own intentions:

> [Joyce:] Yes, I should write about Dubliners – those people who find themselves confined to the circumstances that have plagued them throughout their entire existence. These individuals have become devoid of hope, trapped within a perpetual cycle of despair. One notable figure from my childhood, a priest who suffered a stroke leading to his eventual demise, embodies this entrapment. This imagery is deeply rooted in the essence of Dublin, reflecting a literary manifestation of linguistic paralysis. It is through the portrayal of death and darkness, particularly embodied by the priest, that the theme of a relentless, self-perpetuating cycle is further explored in the concluding story of the collection.[52]

It is necessary to note here that translation is portrayed as a dialogic relationship between the fictional author and translator, endorsing the subversion of hierarchies between them.[53] This conception of translation as a dialogic act alludes to translation as a creative and interpretative endeavour, in which the translator imparts his own understanding onto the text. At this point, it is helpful to cite Douglas Robinson, who posits that the translator partakes in a "hermeneutical dialogue" with the author, whereby the translator is not merely a passive recipient of the source

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47 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics,* 7.
48 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics,* 5.
49 Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics,* 13.
50 Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce, Authorized Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
51 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Canan Aydın, *K24 Kitap*, August 6, 2020, https://www.k24kitap.org/james-joyce-istanbulda-edebiyat-yeri-geldiginde-fevkalade-capulcudur-2670
52 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 53.
53 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 402.

text but an active interpreter of its meaning.[54] In a similar vein, Sevimay endeavors to vitalize the dialogic nature of his translations through the dialogic interchange between the fictional translator and author:[55]

> [Joyce:] I believe that the variable style of the book should be determined by the language used by the novel's characters, as well as the conflicts that arise from the diverse styles of individuals in real life. [...] It is crucial to seamlessly transition between characters and uphold their individual styles. The author ought to minimize their own presence and grant the characters the freedom to craft their own distinct personal space. […]
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> [The Translator:] […] [Y]ou strive to democratize intellect by promoting equitable access to self-expression and recognizing the significance of diverse styles. Moreover, you endeavour to cultivate critical and creative readers who actively contribute to the formation of meaning.
>
> [Joyce:] Yes, indeed […]. Another aspect to consider is the concept of stylistic parodies, wherein humor serves as a counterweight to the gravity of existence. […]
>
> [The Translator:] That is to say, [you seek] to enable distinctive styles to communicate rather than merely caricaturing individuals.

This example also reveals why Sevimay classifies *Benden'iz* as a form of 'dual authorship' (*çifteyazarlık*),[56] which ensures the entwinement of two narrators, akin to "uniting the fingertips of two hands."[57] He likens his work to a "double-roasted text," which is refined through the collaborative effort of two distinct voices.[58] Sevimay's utilization of the term 'dual authorship' constitutes a unique form of narrative where the relationship between two authors -one being Sevimay and the other being Joyce- is central to the novel. At this point, it is worth noting that 'dual authorship' is a religious concept that explains that the Bible is the result of collaboration between two distinct authors: God and human beings. This notion posits that although the divine influence holds primary importance in the composition of scripture, the individual personalities, life experiences, and historical contexts of the human authors equally contribute to shaping the meaning of the text. As we shall see shortly, Sevimay's utilization of this concept is complemented by his employment of the term 'Reader-God', which implies that each literary work is "eternally written here and now," as Barthes argues,[59] first by the writer, and then by the reader, whose creative power Sevimay desires to unleash.

It is also worth explaining why Sevimay incorporates another translational agent in his work, namely the 'editor'. Speaking about an agent of translation entails the active manifestation of a

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54 Douglas Robinson, "The Translator's Turn," (Johns Hopkins UP, 1991), xv.

55 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 31.

56 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 503.

57 Hatice Günday Şahman, "Geçmişten günümüze bir edebiyat şöleni," *Edebiyat Haber*, March 12, 2021, https://www.edebiyathaber.net/gecmisten-gunumuze-bir-edebiyat-soleni-hatice-gunday-sahman/

58 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.

59 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," In *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed.Vincent B. Leitch (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2010), 1325.

voice that is intrinsically linked to interconnected networks of other social agents.[60] For instance, the fictional editor in *Benden'iz* collaborates closely with a fictional reviewer who offers rigorous scholarly interpretations of cultural and historical aspects pertaining to Joyce's literary works. The visibility of the fictional editor and the reviewer in the peritextual notes underscore the polyphonic role of translational agents in ensuring the accessibility of literary works to the public.

To sum up, Sevimay aims to engage the fictional translator, author, editor, reviwer, and reader in a dialogic collaboration centered around Joyce's works in order to prevent the latter's works from becoming mere commodities that are purchased, read, and then forgotten on shelves.[61] Furthermore, Sevimay achieves a polyphony that encompasses other voices, such as the tramp in the park, the taxi driver, the imam, and the priest. As Sevimay's novel unfolds, various writers including Ibsen, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer, and Joyce's contemporaries Italo Svevo, Ezra Pound, and Hemingway, who greatly influenced Joyce, also emerge in the polyphony, each contributing their distinct voices. In this way, Sevimay's transfictional novel aligns with Joyce's aspirations to craft polyphonic literary works.[62]

The Death of the Author

Roland Barthes's seminal work, "The Death of the Author,"[63] critically examines the boundary between the author and the reader, revealing the profound significance of the reader's interpretation of a text. The concept of the 'death of the author' is a significant attribute of polyphonic texts. According to Barthes,[64] the author deliberately constructs their work in a way that enables the reader to disregard the narrator or the author and instead directs their attention solely towards the narrative itself. This implies that "[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing."[65] It can be inferred, therefore, that the 'death of the author' serves to initiate the text, restore its polyphony, and liberate it from the hegemony of intentionality. Therefore, the reader assumes the role of the receptacle in which "all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination."[66] As Barthes argues, "to give writing its future, it

60 Daniel Simeoni, "Translating and studying translation: The view from the agent," *Meta* 40, no. 3 (1995): 452.
61 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.
62 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.
63 Barthes, "The Death of the Author."
64 Barthes, "The Death of the Author."
65 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1325.
66 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1325.

is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author."[67]

Barthes contrasts the concept of 'diachronic author' to 'modern scripture'.[68] The 'diachronic author' derives from the conventional understanding of author whose authority over a work is constructed over time.[69] The 'diachronic author' is recognized as the originator of the meaning conveyed in a work, wherein the work serves as a reflection of the authorial perspectives and experiences spanning a specific period. The 'modern scripture', on the other hand, "is born simultaneously with the text […] there is no other time than that of the enunciation."[70]

As Barthes points out, "[w]e know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash."[71] In this context, the author cannot be relied upon to provide "an ultimate meaning" as the author does not exist as an omnipotent entity outside of the text.[72] Along similar lines, in order to reject the concept of a single 'theological' meaning, a fictional reader writes the epilogue in *Benden'iz*, where the concept of "Reader-God" is introduced:

> [t]he reader should be granted the final say in literature. How can one truly understand literature without engaging in discussions with others, interacting with the author whenever possible, or conversing with the book itself? You have finished reading the book, then you put it back on the shelf, and now you want to buy a new one? Henceforth, let us celebrate the Reader-God as the ultimate authority in the realm of literature.[73]

It is worth noting here that the epilogue is authored by a woman named Sema Gökçe, because, as Sevimay suggests, women play a significant role in Joyce's texts.[74] For instance, the concluding scene in *Dubliners* depicts a woman who is unable to communicate effectively with her intimate companion. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Dedalus attains his artistic vision through his interactions with women. Furthermore, in *Finnegans Wake*, the character Anna Livia Plurabella symbolizes the fundamental essence of femininity and the origin of life. Therefore, by introducing a fictional woman reader to compose an epilogue, Sevimay acknowledges the significance of Joyce's woman-centered thought in challenging the dominant masculine viewpoint from a century ago.

As the following example further illustrates, another fictional woman reader plays an active role in the interpretation of meaning in Joyce's *Ulysses*:

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67 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1326.
68 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1324.
69 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1324.
70 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1325.
71 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1325.
72 Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 1326.
73 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 502.
74 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.

> [Latife:] There is a manifestation of masculinity in the behavior of the repressed woman, Molly. Despite her adherence to traditional norms, she assumes control over her own life. She refuses to succumb to the influence of the male-dominated language. Intrigued by the Italian term she associates herself with, I sought its definition and discovered that it signifies desire. Desire.
>
> [Joyce:] Voglio, interrupted Joyce. Vogliare*.
>
> [Latife:] Different from Gerty, Molly does not perceive herself as an object to be sacrificially offered to the male fetish. Instead, she lives authentically in accordance with her desires and knowledge. The affirmation of 'yes' uttered by Molly at the end of the novel can be interpreted as a profound reflection on both love and life, extending beyond the mere celebration of marriage. Consequently, we may also discern a tinge of melancholy in her final affirmation […] Throughout the novel, we encounter remarks originating from a predominantly male discourse. However, it is Molly who effectively challenges and dismantles the majority of these assertions. In essence, her character prompts us to critically examine the underlying assumptions and implications of *Ulysses*. […] In fact, you are preventing him [Bloom] from saying much about himself. Bloom and Molly are what we, the readers, perceive them as. The destinies of Bloom and Molly are predetermined for our own benefit.[75]

Therefore, Sevimay suggests that since a well-crafted literary work is continuously shaped through the active involvement of the reader, *Benden'iz* can be compared to a literary work that is in the process of being written owing to the potential contributions of the reader.[76] At this juncture, it is noteworthy, from a deconstructionist standpoint, that the translator undertakes the position of a reader throughout the translation process.[77] By the same token, Sevimay emphasizes that "the translator transforms into a reader, and the reader undergoes a metamorphosis into a book" in *Benden'iz*.[78]

In this particular context, as explained by Arrojo,[79] the notion of the 'death of the author' highlights the significance of the translator within the realms of translation, which downplays the author's traditional authority to impose their interpretation on the reader. In this perspective, the translator is not merely a passive mediator but rather a co-creator. Hence, Sevimay posits that translators with a "writerly fabric" can be seen as engaging in the act of writing throughout the translation process, rather than simply translating from one language into another.[80] This point highlights the significance that Sevimay places on the 'translator's voice'. On the other hand, Sevimay also emphasizes the importance of treading carefully between translatorial interference and translatorial contribution, asserting that there is no room for arbitrary involvement in the emotional and substantive essence of the source text.[81] It is within this framework that Sevimay's

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75 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 383-384.

76 Sevimay, interview by Aydın.

77 Jean Boase-Beier, *Stylistic approaches to translation* (London: Routledge, 2014).

78 Sevimay, interview by Akdemir.

79 Rosemary Arrojo, "Asymmetrical relations of power and the ethics of translation," 22-24.

80 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Kadir İncesu, September 12, 2021, https://www.evrensel.net/haber/442504/fuat-sevimay-ceviri-de-bir-nevi-yazarlik

81 Fuat Sevimay, interview by Eylül Er, Oggito, November 15, 2018. https://oggito.com/icerikler/fuat-sevimay-cevirmenligime-okurlarin-karar-vermesi-gerekiyordu/63442

fictional translator (i.e., the "translator as reader"[82]) destabilizes the traditional author-centered approach, encouraging translators to take on a more visible role. This standpoint also highlights Sevimay's ethical considerations involved in translation.

The discipline of deconstruction has provided Translation Studies with a fertile environment for re-examining the position of the source text and, consequently, the ethical position that translators adopt in relation to it. In earlier periods, translators primarily focused on identifying textual equivalence. However, in the context of the postmodern era, it is argued that interpretation is inherently interconnected with the act of reading. Therefore, "it has been argued that striving for invisibility can be seen as unethical. If translators embrace the fantasy that they can be completely objective and invisible, then they will not critically look at the role they are actually playing."[83] It is worth noting that Sevimay metaphorically elucidates the distinct roles of the author and the translator as interconnected entities, comparable to 'ivy' that share a common root, symbolizing the respective contributions of each party to the process of translation.[84] The 'ivy' metaphor signifies divergent yet connected trajectories, originating from the same foundational source. The metaphor emphasizes both individuality and interconnectedness, highlighting the idea that translation is linked to a larger, collaborative process.

From Transfiction to Translator History

The above-mentioned points derived from *Benden'iz* elucidate Sevimay's perspectives on the role and ethics of translators, demonstrating how transfiction can function as a form of microhistory and serve as an archival method for research on translators. The growing fascination with individual translators and the subsequent efforts to recognize translators as agents, possessing their own interests, identity, and history, have sparked numerous investigations in the field of Translation Studies. To begin, Douglas Robinson's book, *The Translator's Turn*,[85] emphasizes the importance of human agents, specifically translators, in the translation process. In a similar vein, Daniel Simeoni explores the agency and social context of translators, advocating for the study of their sociobiographies.[86] These endevaours are followed by Anthony Pym's investigation of the "human translator,"[87] as well as Chesterman's integration of a new branch called "Translator

82 Jean Boase-Beier, *Stylistic Approaches to Translation*, 5.

83 Ben van Wyke, "Ethics and translation," In *Handbook of Translation Studies* 1, ed. Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010), 113.

84 Sevimay, *Benden'iz James Joyce*, 402.

85 Douglas Robinson, "The Translator's Turn."

86 Simeoni, Daniel. "The pivotal status of the translator's habitus," *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies* 10, no. 1 (1998): 2.

87 Anthony Pym, *Method in translation history* (London: Routledge, 2014), ix.

Studies" into Holmes's existing map of Translation Studies.[88] These scholarly pursuits are further supported by an increasing focus on the sociology of translation, which utilizes various conceptual tools to elucidate the interaction between translators, translated texts, and the context in which they are produced and received.

Microhistory aims to "shed light on the bigger picture of the history of translation in specific socio-historical and cultural contexts."[89] Due to the prevailing interest in Translation Studies to highlight the role of translators, microhistories have emerged as a means to shed light on the often neglected or underestimated contributions of translators within the broader context of cultural history.[90] Gathering data to study the history of translators involves analyzing various types of primary sources. These sources include personal accounts, such as memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, prefaces, and drafts.[91] Newspaper articles, which are traditionally regarded as primary sources, also provide valuable insights into the translatorial habitus.[92] Along similar lines, María Constanza Guzmán notes that the materials produced by translators, such as their literary works, statements, interviews, correspondence with the other agents involved in the translation process, contracts, as well as their unpublished works, provide a comprehensive resource for comprehending the translator's role and the sociocultural environment in which translation takes place. [93]

In this particular context, Sevimay's novel can be regarded as a significant resource for researchers interested in conducting microhistorical research on his translatorial agency. Since the translator persona of Sevimay has a significant impact on his authorship in *Benden'iz*, his book may function as a microscopic examination of his translatorial habitus. Therefore, *Benden'iz* can be utilized to enhance the scholarly discourse surrounding the sociological and cultural dimensions of Sevimay's translations, as well as the factors that influence the dissemination and reception of his translated works.

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88 Andrew Chesterman, "The name and nature of translator studies," *HERMES-Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, no. 42, (2009): 13. James S. Holmes, "The name and nature of translation studies," In *The translation studies reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000).

89 Jeremy Munday, "Using primary sources to produce a microhistory of translation and translators: theoretical and methodological concerns," *The Translator* 20, no. 1 (2014): 65.

90 Christopher Rundle, "Translation and fascism," In *The Routledge handbook of translation and politics*, ed. Jonathan Evans and Fruela Fernandez (London: Routledge, 2018), 239.

91 Richard Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 309.

92 Pearce-Moses, *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, 309.

93 María Constanza Guzmán, "(re) Visiting the Translator's Archive: Toward a Genealogy of Translation in the Americas," *Palimpsestes. Revue de traduction*, no. 34 (2020): 45.

Conclusion

This study has set out to explore the role of transfiction in unearthing how Fuat Sevimay's translator persona informs his narrative voice in his novel entitled *Benden'iz James Joyce.* As the representative examples have illustrated, the polyphonic discourse of the novel is shaped by Sevimay's contention that translation encapsulates a polyphony that blends the voices of both the translator and the author. This aligns with Sevimay's utilization of the concept of 'dual authorship' in the novel. Notably, Sevimay's emphasis on the prominence of the translator's voice also signifies his ethical position regarding translatorial visibility. This standpoint is further exemplified by his paratextual and extratextual visibility within the realm of literature and translation. An additional noteworthy point is that since every translator serves primarily as the reader of the source text, Sevimay's notion of the 'Reader-God' aligns perfectly with the concept of the 'death of the author' in translation, as Arrojo would argue.[94]

Transfiction in general and the transfictional narratives penned by the translators in particular can be seen as a response to Anthony Pym's call to humanize the history of translation.[95] Therefore, Sevimay's novel serves as a valuable source of data that elucidates how his authorial voice aids in empowering translators through the creation of a space in which they can demonstrate their agency. Sevimay's book further serves as a paratext that elucidates the fictional and real translatorial persona of Sevimay, while simultaneously functioning as a metadiscourse that blurs the lines between fact and fiction. Hence, Sevimay's work can be viewed as an exploration of translator history, focusing on two key principles: prioritizing Sevimay as an individual rather than solely focusing on the texts he works with, and acknowledging his role as a social agent. In this respect, Sevimay's book should not be seen as "the ultimate end of research, but its starting point," as Bergantino would suggest.[96] Future research could effectively examine Sevimay's book to uncover the "hidden traces" he has left as a translator, to use Munday's words. [97] Therefore, his book can be considered an endeavour to construct micro-histories of translation and translators, drawing upon the traces left by the creative agency and visibility of translators that extend beyond the translated texts.

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94 Arrojo, "Asymmetrical relations of power and the ethics of translation."

95 Anthony Pym, "Humanizing translation history," *HERMES-Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, no. 42 (2009): 24.

96 Bergantino, "Book Review," *Perspectives* 31, no. 4 (2023): 764.

97 Jeremy Munday, "The role of archival and manuscript research in the investigation of translator decision-making," *Target*. *International Journal of Translation Studies* 25, no. 1 (2013): 126.

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